

# Broward SLI

State Legislative Information

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## Governor Announces Support for Medicaid Expansion

On Wednesday, February 20, 2013, Governor Rick Scott officially announced his support for Medicaid expansion under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. The Governor said he would support expanding Medicaid eligibility for three years. During that time the federal government will pay 100 percent of the expansion costs. After those three years, the Governor would support reauthorization if the program is successful. Expansion is predicted to add roughly 900,000 new participants to the Medicaid program. With the Governor's support known, the focus shifts to the Legislature to ultimately decide the expansion's fate. Senate President Don Gaetz and House Speaker Will Weatherford have repeatedly stated that the Legislature will make the ultimate decision on whether the state will expand Medicaid. This issue is at the forefront of priorities for the upcoming 2013 Legislative Session beginning on March 4, 2013.

## Federal Government Approves Final Medicaid Reform Managed Care Waiver

On Monday, February 18, 2013, the Federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced they are prepared to approve Florida's 1115 waiver request to implement a Medicaid managed care system throughout the state. In 2011, the Florida Legislature passed a bill to shift all Florida's Medicaid to accomplish this, but was contingent on federal approval of several waivers. This was the last waiver required to move ahead with the reforms into 2014.

## Local Living Wage Preemption Legislation Advances

On Wednesday, February 20, 2013, legislation that would preempt local living wage ordinances passed the Local and Federal Affairs Committee in the House of Representatives. [HB 655 – Political Subdivisions](#) will prevent local governments from requiring employers to provide certain employment benefits and from requiring, or awarding preference on basis of, certain wages or employment benefits when contracting for goods or service.

The bill was filed in response to a charter amendment voter initiative in Orange County, Florida. The initiative would have mandated all employers to cover shared sick time regardless of whether those businesses contracted for services or goods with the County.

Broward County staff met with the sponsor before the bill was heard and voiced concerns over the far reaching nature of the bill. The sponsor pledged to work with the County to narrow the scope of his bill and better accommodate the current Broward County living wage ordinance.

## Water Meetings with Representatives

This week the Florida Chapter of the American Water Works Association assembled in Tallahassee to advocate for dedicated funding for water infrastructure projects. Terry Karda, Director of Operations at Broward County's Water and Wastewater Division, and staff met with major lawmakers such as Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, Senate President Designate Andy Gardiner, House Speaker Designate Steve Crisafulli, Senator Maria Sachs, Representative Hazel Rogers, and other Senators and Representatives. The group also met with Representative Dana Young, who is sponsoring [House Bill 109 – Consumptive Use Permits for Development of Alternative Water Supplies](#), a bill the County supports. Other topics discussed were the importance of responsibly implementing the [ocean outfall](#) requirements and the need to invest in infrastructure.

## Florida Clean Indoor Air Act Passes First Senate Committee

Legislation giving local governments the authority to restrict smoking in certain public spaces passed its first committee of reference Thursday, February 21, 2013. Currently, Florida law preempts regulation of smoking to the state and supersedes any municipal or county ordinance. [House Bill 258 – Florida Clean Indoor Air Act](#) received support from local governments and health related organizations. Restaurants raised concerns regarding the law being enforced inconsistently across different jurisdictions and the potential negative impacts on business that have outdoor dining and seating. The bill was unanimously approved in committee.

## Statewide Domestic Partnership Registry Bill Stalls in Committee

On Tuesday, February 19, 2013, legislation that would establish a statewide domestic partnership registry stalled in the Senate Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs. Sen. Sobel, the sponsor of [SB 196 – Families First](#), filed similar legislation during the last four legislative sessions. Tuesday was the first time legislation of this nature had been heard in a legislative committee. After a long debate, with support and opposition, the sponsor temporarily postponed the advancement of the bill. Understanding the historic nature of the hearing and the unlikely opportunity for passage, Sen. Sobel committed to tweaking the bill to narrow its scope. Other members of the committee expressed potential support for the bill if the language was narrowed. Sen. Sobel committed to bringing the bill back in a more suitable posture for the committee.

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### INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS STAFF

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## Synthetic Drug Bill Approved at First Committee Stop

Legislation amending Florida law to add numerous synthetic cannabinoids, cathinones and phenethylamines to Schedule I of Florida controlled substance schedules passed the House Criminal Justice Committee. As a result, criminal penalties relating to possession, sale, manufacture, and delivery of controlled substances would apply to the new synthetic substances. [HB 619 – Controlled Substance by Rep. Ingram](#) was filed in response to an emergency rule filed by Attorney General Pam Bondi that temporarily placed the above synthetics in Schedule I. The temporary rule expires on June 30, 2013, without legislative action. The bill garnered support from law enforcement and received a unanimous positive vote.