

# Legislative Link

A legislative update provided by the United Way of Florida, Inc.

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

Bills Heard This Week.....4



**United Way of Florida, Inc.**  
**307 E. Seventh Avenue**  
**Tallahassee, FL 32303**  
**850/488-8287**

## FLORIDA BUDGET PICTURE CLOUDY

Last week, due to a technical problem, about half of your Legislative link was not received. The headline for that issue was the report by the Revenue Estimating Conference that the state is facing a budget shortfall this fiscal year of \$1.1 billion and an additional budget shortfall of \$2.3 billion next fiscal year, which begins July 1. When added to the shortfall that was previously projected, the total shortfall for next fiscal year is \$6.7 billion, a staggering 20 percent drop since 2006. Fortunately, it is projected that federal stimulus funds will reduce that total to the \$2.3 billion shortfall.

Estimated revenue collections for this fiscal year are less than Fiscal Year 2007-08 receipts by \$3.2 billion or 13.1%. For next fiscal year, the state will have only \$19.9 billion for its general revenue fund, a \$6.4 billion drop from the 2006-07 budget year.

With nearly 800,000 Floridians out of work and projected property tax declines of about \$1 billion because some 300,000 homes are vacant statewide, the economic outlook for the foreseeable future is full of thunder heads.

Until just two short years ago, the state had never experienced two consecutive years of less general revenue. We are now entering our fourth straight year of declining revenues. Historic times.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST – THIS YEAR'S SHORTFALL

On Thursday, Governor Crist told state agencies to withhold 15 percent of their spending for the final three months of the year, which amounts to about an \$800 million cut to state services. Crist's budget office called the move "precautionary" and said the withheld money could still be released as federal economic stimulus checks arrive. The problem is that, while it is anticipated that more than \$800 million in stimulus funds will arrive in the state by the June 30 fiscal year end, it is unclear when they will arrive and the constitution requires a balanced budget at year's end.

The Governor's office said it will consider on a case-by-case basis making exceptions to the hold-back, if agencies identify crisis situations.

## SENATE REVIEWS POTENTIAL CUTS FOR NEXT YEAR

In Senate hearings this week, some state agencies went through an "exercise" detailing what they would cut if they had to make cuts of from 10 percent to 20 percent of their general revenue. Horror stories abounded.

Senate leaders explained that it was just an exercise intended to identify the where cuts might be made, but expressed hope that such deep cuts would not have to be made.

*continued on next page*

## Senate Reviews Potential Cuts for Next Year continued

Next week, the Senate is expected to provide its first set of budget proposals for next year. It will undoubtedly include significant cuts and is expected to include some revenue enhancements, including increased fees and possible tax increases, particularly on cigarettes.

Yesterday, House Speaker Larry Cretul informed representatives that he intends for the House to vote on its version of next year's budget on April 17. Rumors are already circulating that the leadership of both houses anticipates extending the session or having to go into special session to bring budget talks to an end.

## **NEW WEBSITE INFORM PUBLIC ON VENDORS AND STIMULUS**

Members of the Senate have talked all session long about making the budget accessible to Floridians online. Recently the House also took up the call. But, Governor Charlie Crist and CFO Alex Sink beat both houses to the punch this week when they announced the unveiling of their website that will allow Floridians to access information about vendors receiving state dollars. To access the site and submit an inquiry regarding how much money vendors may be receiving, go to <http://flgov.com/sunshinespending>.

Then, later in the week, the recently created Florida Office of Economic Recovery posted its new website containing information on stimulus funds coming to Florida through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. To access the site, go to <http://flarecovery.com/>. In all, Florida will get \$13.4 billion for a variety of programs intended to save or create 206,000 jobs in the state.

## **ALTERNATIVE REVENUE SOURCES PROMOTED**

There is a growing clamor for the Legislature to consider alternative revenue sources (i.e. raising taxes or removing tax exemptions) to fill the budget abyss, and there seems to be growing recognition by many legislators that unless alternative sources are considered, the cuts to education and human services will be too draconian to even consider.

This week the Florida Education Association, the 140,000 member union representing Florida's teachers, came to Tallahassee promoting their proposal to raise the statewide sales tax from 6 cents to 7 cents on the dollar, with any local taxes added on top of that. The increase would expire after three years, and would raise between \$2.8 and \$3.8 billion. The three year period would provide legislators the opportunity to carefully craft a new taxing structure for Florida that would bring the state into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Likewise, another coalition of more than 30 statewide organizations held a press conference this week to urge the Legislature to use all federal stimulus funds available to the state for their intended purpose. During the two-to-three years the funds are available, the Legislature could implement a new taxing structure. To review information about the current budget situation and options for addressing it and re-crafting a more fair and equitable taxing structure, go to <http://www.fcsep.org/>.

But will the Legislature consider alternative revenue sources? Senate leaders have stated since before session that they will look at new revenue sources such as cigarette tax in addition to fee increases and a gambling agreement with the Seminole Tribe.

## Alternative Revenue Sources Promoted continued

But Governor Crist and House leaders have opposed any suggestion of a tax increase, although the governor has backed more than \$500 million in fee increases in his proposed 2009-2010 budget and supports the Seminole gambling deal that could bring nearly \$300 million to the state next year

### **ONE OUT OF SIX CHILDREN UNINSURED IN FLORIDA, SECOND HIGHEST RATE OF UNINSURED CHILDREN IN THE NATION**

Late last year, Families USA released a report showing that there are 797,000 uninsured children in Florida—more than one out of six children in the state (18.8 percent). This places Florida third in the nation for the number of uninsured children, and second nationally for the percentage of children in the state without health insurance.

Titled “Left Behind: Florida’s Uninsured Children,” the report covers the three-year period from 2005-2007 and therefore does not reflect estimated increases due to the worsening economic situation in 2008. During the six year period from 2003-2007, the number of uninsured children in Florida increased by nearly 78,000, or 10.9 percent.

The report concluded that over half, or 60.7 percent, of Florida's uninsured children come from low-income families (families with incomes below twice the poverty level, or \$35,200 for a family of three in 2008) who are likely eligible for KidCare.

### **CONGRESS MOVES ON VOLUNTEERISM**

On Wednesday, the House passed [H.R. 1388 the “Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education” \(GIVE\) Act 321-105](#). The bill reauthorizes the National and Community Service Act of 1990. It has been 16 years since national service has been reauthorized. Among others, the legislation expands AmeriCorps to 250,000 participants by 2014 and focuses the program on addressing challenges facing America (Education Corps, Healthy Futures Corps, Clean Energy Corps, Veterans Corps, and Opportunity Corps). It will also create two new programs, the Serve America Fellowships and the Campuses of Service, to expand state volunteer commissions’ roles; makes fixed amount grants available to make AmeriCorps more accessible to smaller organizations, especially those in rural parts of the country; and adds a Volunteer Generation Fund that will support volunteer infrastructure at the state and local level.

### **TEMPORARY HOMELESS PREVENTION FUNDS ON THE WAY**

During the 2007-08 fiscal year, nearly 170,000 Florida households were evicted by court order for non-payment of rent or mortgages. The state's Office on Homelessness, part of the Florida Department of Children and Families, reported this week that Florida will receive \$65 million in homeless prevention funds that will provide emergency-assistance to help families get through a crisis, so they don’t lose their home. The funds will be used to assist renters who are behind on rent or utility payments and those who have been recently evicted. Homeowners facing foreclosure will be helped under other programs. For growing numbers of renters who are evicted because the landlord has defaulted on their mortgage, the funds can be used to cover the first and last months' rent and a deposit on another house or apartment. The funds should be available in a month or so.

## **ANOTHER LOW RANKING FOR FLORIDA**

The Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reported this week that Florida ranks 47 out of the 50 states in drawing down federal money for disease prevention. Alaska, which ranked first, receives about \$52 per person, while Florida receives about \$13 per person. The state-by-state report can be seen at <http://healthyamericans.org/>.

## **BILLS HEARD THIS WEEK**

*(Some information below is excerpted from legislative staff analysis)*

### **HJR 65 - Department of Elder Affairs (Pafford)**

HJR 65 proposes an amendment to Section 12 of Article IV of the Florida Constitution to redesignate the Department of Elderly Affairs as the Department of Elder Affairs.

This joint resolution to redesignate the department must be approved by a 3/5 vote of the membership of each house of the Legislature. If enacted by such a vote, the proposal will be presented to the electors of Florida during the state's next general election. Final approval requires a favorable vote from 60 percent or more of the electors of the state.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable by Elder & Family Services Policy Committee*

### **HB 89 - Autism (Precourt and others)**

HB 89 provides that parents or legal guardians who believe their minor child exhibits symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder to report their observation to a licensed physician. Based on the reported observation of the parent or guardian, the physician must immediately refer the minor to an appropriate specialist for screening for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Health Care Services Policy Committee*

### **CS/HB 185 - Access to Health Care (Health Care Regulation Policy committee and Hudson and others)**

The Florida Healthy Kids Corporation ("Corporation"), under contract with the Agency for Health Care Administration, performs administrative functions for the overall Florida KidCare program and administers the SCHIP HealthyKids program. The Corporation handles eligibility determination, premium billing and collection, refunds, and customer service for KidCare, except for the large Medicaid component, which is administered by the Agency and the Department of Children and Families.

The bill increases the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation board of directors from 11 to 12 members. The member would be appointed by the Governor from three candidates nominated by the Florida Dental Association.

The bill prohibits all prepaid limited health service organizations from prohibiting their contract providers from contracting with more than one prepaid limited health service organization provider. The bill further prohibits prepaid health service organizations from requiring a contracted health service provider to accept the terms of other contracts entered into by other providers.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable by Health & Family Services Policy Council*

**SB 348 - Medicaid buy-in for persons with disabilities (Crist)**

SB 348 establishes new Medicaid “buy-in” coverage for working disabled individuals aged 16 through 64 who would be eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) if earnings equal to 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) were disregarded, and unearned income did not exceed 88 percent of the FPL. A participant in the Medicaid buy-in program must be charged a premium based on a sliding scale once the participant’s earned income exceeds 100 percent of the FPL. Assets excluded, in addition to SSI, are: cash assets in the amount of \$10,000 for a single individual and \$15,000 for a couple; any retirement account recognized by the Internal Revenue Service, and a second vehicle for a couple.

The bill also requires the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to seek amendments to existing Medicaid waiver coverage groups that would allow those who are eligible under the proposed Medicaid buy-in program to be eligible to receive services provided under Medicaid waivers serving persons with disabilities.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 SENATE Favorable with CS by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee*

**SB 354 - Health Insurance Coverage for Mental and Nervous Disorders (Senator Crist)**

Presently, group insurers and HMOs are required to make available (offer) at the time of application for group health insurance, the option of coverage for mental illness or nervous disorders. The law provides that mental health benefits may not be less favorable than for physical illness, generally, with respect to durational limits, dollar amounts, deductibles, and coinsurance factors, except that the policy may have the following minimum limits on mental health benefits:

- Inpatient benefits may be limited to not less than 30 days per benefit year;
- Outpatient benefits may be limited to \$1,000 per benefit year; and
- Partial hospitalization benefits may be limited to the equivalent of 30 days of inpatient hospitalization.

SB 354 expands the benefits that insurers and health maintenance organizations (HMOs) are required to offer to group policyholders (e.g., employers) for a specific set of mental, nervous, and substance-related disorders. The bill specifies that the benefit limits for these listed mental health and substance-related disorders (i.e., inpatient hospitalization, partial hospitalization, outpatient durational limits, dollar amounts, deductibles, and coinsurance) may not be more restrictive than the treatment limitations and cost-sharing requirements under the plan that are applicable to other diseases, illnesses, and medical conditions. The bill also specifies that health plans may have benefit limits for all other mental health disorders not specifically listed in the bill lower than those for physical illnesses generally within certain parameters (i.e., inpatient benefits may be limited to not less than 30 days per benefit year as defined in the policy or contract).

The bill repeals the current optional coverage requirement for substance abuse impaired persons specified in s. 627.669, F.S., because substance-abuse disorders are included within the group of listed conditions in the optional coverage for mental and nervous disorders requirement, as amended by this bill.

*Last Action: 03/17/09 SENATE Favorable with CS by Banking and Insurance Committee*

Bill Heard This Week continued

**HB 381 - Care of Children (Thompson)**

HB 381 makes a number of changes to chapter 39, Florida Statutes, relating to grandparents and other relatives caring for children. This bill provides, in part, the following:

- The Florida Department of Children and Families' (Department's) quality assurance program must analyze unaccepted reports to the abuse hotline by identified relatives as part of its review of screened out hotline calls;
- A relative may request to receive notification of all proceedings and hearings related to a child and the attorney for the Department must provide such notification to a relative who requests it;
- The attorney for the Department must notify a relative who has requested such notification of the next judicial review hearing;
- Physicians and mental health professionals engaged in the care or treatment of a child may have access to reports and records in cases of child abuse or neglect and specified medical records must be preserved in permanent form by the Department; and
- A reporter of abuse, abandonment or neglect must be provided with the name and other contact information of the protective investigator.

In addition, the bill designates the first Sunday after Labor Day as "Grandparents' and Family Caregivers' Day." This bill may be cited as the "Zahid Jones, Jr. Give Grandparents and Other Relatives a Voice Act."

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable by Health & Family Services Policy Council*

**HB 589 - Alzheimer's Disease (Schwartz)**

HB 589 directs the Department of Elderly Affairs to develop a public education program regarding memory impairment screening and early diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

The bill authorizes the Department to award grants to public and nonprofit private entities that provide services and care to individuals who have Alzheimer's disease or related disorders.

The bill also directs the Department to conduct or provide support for a study concerning screening for memory impairment.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Elder & Family Services Policy Committee*

**SJR 738 - Limitation on Amount of Combined Ad Valorem Taxes (Senator Bennett)**

Property taxes are the largest source of revenue for local governments. In 2007, the just value of all real property in Florida was \$2.5 trillion and the taxable value was \$1 .7 trillion. The just value of homestead property was \$1.2 trillion and the taxable value was \$618.6 billion.<sup>7</sup> The statewide average millage rate in 2007 was 17.02 mills. In 2008, the statewide average millage rate was 16.57 mills.

This joint resolution proposes an amendment to Art. VII, section 9 of the State Constitution to limit the aggregate total property taxes collected by counties, municipalities, special districts, and school districts to 1.35 percent (13.5 mills) of a parcel's highest taxable value. The joint resolution provides that "taxable value" is the value of real property to which millage rates are applied.

Bill Heard This Week continued

This joint resolution does not directly limit the taxing authority of local governments to a collective rate of 13.5 mills. It does provide that they may not retain revenue collected for more than 13.5 mills worth of the highest taxable value of real property and that the Legislature will provide, by general law, for the distribution of ad valorem taxes collected on call parcels for which the total aggregate millage exceeds 13.5 mills.

The Revenue Estimating Conference has not reviewed this proposal but did prepare an "Initiative Financial Information Statement" for the citizens initiative which was removed from the ballot for the 2008 General Election by the Florida Supreme Court, and calculated an estimated reduction in total school, county, municipal, and special district property tax revenues of at least \$6 billion beginning in 2011.

*Last Action: 03/17/09 SENATE Favorable with 1 Amendment by Community Affairs Committee*

**CS/HB 745 - Prepaid Services for Parents of Children with Developmental Disabilities (Ford)**

CS/HB 745 establishes a study group to determine the feasibility of creating a prepaid service plan for children with disabilities modeled after the Florida prepaid college plan. The prepaid service plan would allow funds to be paid into a fund on behalf of a child and would be used for vouchers for services to help the child to transition into the workforce. In addition, the bill:

- Specifies membership of the study group;
- Provides administrative support for the study group; and,
- Requires the study group to submit a final report to the legislature no later than January 29, 2010.

The final report will address services for which a voucher could be used, financial requirements, qualifications of service providers, and steps necessary to qualify this plan for a federal waiver program that would allow for federal financial participation.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable by Health & Family Services Policy Council*

**SB 770 - Area Agencies on Aging (Senator Fasano)**

SB 770 clarifies that private non-profit Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs or agencies) who contract with the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA or department) to administer federal Older Americans Act programs are not state agencies as contemplated by the Administrative Procedures Act, and are therefore not subject to its provisions.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 SENATE Favorable with CS by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee*

**HB 783 - Education for Children in Shelter Care or Foster Care (Kelly and others)**

HB 783 provides authority for the district school board or dependency court to appoint a surrogate parent for a child known to the department who has or is suspected of having a disability for purposes of educational decision making. Before appointing a surrogate, it must be determined that no parent can be located and no person holds the right to make educational decisions for the child. Qualifications of a surrogate parent are specified, including who may, and may not, serve as a surrogate parent. In addition, the bill:

Bill Heard This Week continued

- Requires the court to request parental consent to provide access to a child's medical records and educational records to the court, the department or its contract agencies and any guardian ad litem or attorney for the child if the child is placed in shelter following a shelter hearing;
- Provides that judicial and citizen panel reviews of dependency cases must include consideration of testimony from a surrogate parent; and
- Adds children who are in shelter or foster care to those children who can be granted a 30 day exception to providing records for purposes of school enrollment and obtaining health records and immunizations.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Health Care Services Policy Committee*

**SB 892 - Integrated Substance Abuse and Mental Health Facilities (Senator Bennett)**

SB 892 authorizes the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), in consultation with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF or department), to establish integrated mental health crisis stabilization and addictions receiving facilities for adults. The bill specifies categories of individuals who may receive services in these facilities, and requires DCF, in consultation with AHCA, to adopt by rule standards governing the facilities.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 SENATE Favorable with CS by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee*

**HB 935 - Area Agencies on Aging (Bogdanoff)**

HB 935 amends several sections of law relating to Area Agencies on Aging. Specifically, the bill clarifies that private, non-profit Area Agencies on Aging that contract with the Department of Elderly Affairs to provide services according to the Federal Older Americans Act are not "state agencies" as contemplated by the Administrative Procedures Act. The bill further clarifies that the Division of Administrative Hearings does not have jurisdiction to hear competitive procurement appeals made by the Area Agencies on Aging.

The bill revises the definition of a lead agency and provides that Area Agencies on Aging may develop service contracts with lead agencies for a period of six years, without consulting with the department.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Elder & Family Services Policy Committee*

**SB 1128 - Education/Children in Shelter Care of Foster Care (Senator Rich)**

SB 1128 defines a surrogate parent as an individual appointed to act in the place of a parent in making educational decisions and safeguarding a child's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The bill specifies the responsibilities of a school district and the courts for appointing a surrogate parent for a dependent child or a child in foster care who has or is suspected of having a disability. The bill prescribes the circumstances under which the appointment must be made.

The bill also:

- Specifies the qualifications for a surrogate parent;
- Provides access to confidential reports and records of child abuse for a local school district employee who is designated to act as a liaison between the school district, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCF), and the principal of the child's school;

Bill Heard This Week continued

- Authorizes the court to enter an order granting access to medical records and education records of children placed in shelter care to the court, the DCF, the DCF contract providers, and the child's guardian ad litem and attorney;
- Authorizes the court to appoint a surrogate parent for a child who resides in a licensed group care or therapeutic setting and for any child under its jurisdiction;
- Provides that judicial and citizen panel reviews of dependency cases must consider a surrogate parent's testimony, determine who has the right to make educational decisions for the child, and if necessary, appoint a surrogate parent for the child or refer the child to a district school board for appointment; and
- Provides a temporary exemption for dependent children and children in foster care from providing proof of age and school entry health examinations and immunizations prior to attending school.

*Last Action:* 03/18/09 SENATE Favorable with CS by Education Pre-K-12 Committee

**HB 1143 - Department of Children and Family Services (Aubuchon)**

HB 1143 provides for the reorganization of the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The 2007 Legislature directed the department to begin the process of reorganization subject to further legislative review and approval. The bill places in statute the reorganization plans of DCF in response to the 2007 Legislative directive. Among others the bill makes the following changes:

- Integrates the substance abuse and mental health programs into DCF;
- Provides for the appointment of assistant secretaries as needed and retains the position of Assistant Secretary for Substance Abuse and Mental Health;
- Changes the sub-state structure of DCF by eliminating service districts and providing that services will be delivered through operating units known as circuits which must be aligned with judicial circuits and an unspecified number of regional divisions; and
- Provides the Department with discretion on the establishment of community alliances, partnerships and advisory groups.

*Last Action:* 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Health Care Services Policy Committee

**SB 1404 - Child-Restraint Requirements (Senators Altman, Gelber and others)**

A study published in a 2003 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), found the odds of injury were 59 percent lower for children aged 4 to 7 years in belt-positioning boosters than in seat belts. Children in belt-positioning booster seats had no injuries to the abdomen, neck/spine/back, or lower extremities, while children in seat belts alone had injuries to all body regions. The AMA concluded state child restraint laws should be revised to include the use of booster seats for children through age 7.

SB 1404 revises child restraint requirements for child passengers in motor vehicles. Current law requires use of a car seat for children through age 5 years, although for ages 4 through 5 years, a seat belt may be used in lieu of a car seat. Under the bill's provisions, the upper age is raised to 7 years, and a seat belt alone would no longer legally provide sufficient protection for children aged 4 through 7 years. These children would be required to be in either a car seat or booster seat. The infraction is a moving violation punishable by a fine of \$60 plus court costs and add-ons, and by assessment of 3 points against the driver's license.

Bill Heard This Week continued

The bill provides exceptions to the child restraint law for persons who are:

- Visiting the state;
- Transporting the child gratuitously and in good faith in response to a declared emergency situation or an immediate emergency involving the child; or
- Transporting a child whose medical condition necessitates an exception as evidenced by appropriate documentation from a health professional.

*Last Action: 03/17/09 SENATE Favorable with CS by Transportation Committee*

**HB 1493 - Substance Abuse Services (Rogers)**

HB 1493 makes substantive changes to Florida Statutes relating to Mental Health, Florida Statutes relating to Substance Abuse, and Florida Statutes relating to Medical Review Committees. Among others, the bill:

- Deletes a requirement for a contract between the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and residential treatment facilities. These facilities were previously licensed and paid through DCF but this function has since been shifted to the Agency for Health Care Administration;
- Sets client eligibility for substance abuse and mental health services by establishing priority populations to receive these services;
- Makes substantial changes to the licensure process for substance abuse programs and would require licenses to be issued by service component, rather than the current process of issuing a license by facility;
- Requires DCF to coordinate licensure inspections with other state agencies;
- Changes current law to allow probationary and interim licenses to be issued when an owner, director, or chief financial officer of an applicant facility has not received a clear background screening; and
- Authorizes DCF to establish a medical review committee for quality assurance of substance abuse, mental health and forensic programs.

The bill is anticipated to have a fiscal impact though a reduction of licensure fee collections of approximately \$233,297.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 HOUSE Favorable with CS by Health Care Services Policy Committee*

**SJR 1906 - Government Revenues/Voter Approval/New Taxes & Fees (Senator Haridopolos)**

SJR 1906 proposes an amendment to Section 1 and the creation of a new section in Article VII of the State Constitution, to provide the following:

- Replaces the existing state revenue limit based on Florida personal income growth with new state revenue limits, and creates a local government revenue limit;
- Limits property tax revenues based on changes in local growth and school enrollment changes;
- Requires excess revenues to be deposited into budget stabilization funds and provides for distribution of the excess funds;
- Authorizes voters to permit the collection of revenues in excess of the limit;
- Authorizes the Legislature and the local government governing body to approve emergency taxes by a supermajority vote; and

Bill Heard This Week continued

- Prohibits state and local government from imposing new taxes, fees, assessments, or charges for services without first obtaining approval by a supermajority vote of electors voting on the issue.

The proposed amendment will be submitted to the electors at the general election in 2010 or at an earlier special election specifically authorized by law for the purpose, and will take effect upon adoption. The Legislature is required to adopt implementing legislation which must take effect July 1, 2011.

*Last Action: 03/18/09 SENATE Temporarily postponed by Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee*



## United Way of Florida

### UNITED WAY OF FLORIDA, INC.

Tallahassee, FL 32303  
Phone - (850) 488-8287  
Fax - (850) 681-9137

**Ted Granger**  
President & Editor

**Beth Meredith**  
*Chief Operating Officer*

**Kay Racine**  
*Office Manager*

**Legislative Link** is published by the United Way of Florida, Inc. for our members who may reproduce this newsletter for staff, volunteers, and agencies. All others must call 850/488-8287 for reprint permission.