

Legislative Link

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

IT'S NOT OVER . . .

It is anticipated that the 2003 Regular Session will end this evening without the Legislature having completed its one constitutionally mandated task – passing next year's budget. Consequently, a special session will be called to deal with the budget and other huge issues such as medical malpractice that got bogged down as a result of budget wrangling.

History tells us one thing about special sessions: if the outcomes are not pretty well greased before they are called, they usually implode. Governor Bush, Senate President Jim King, and House Speaker Johnny Byrd are now meeting to decide when to call the special session, with the Governor and Speaker hoping to call it sooner than later, so anticipated pressure from voters in the districts will not weaken their "no new taxes" position. If history provides any insights, setting a special session at this point, without there being any substantive resolution to the major issues at bar, is a formula for failure. Hopefully, regardless of the benefits or detriment to either the House or Senate special session strategies, they will call the session at an appropriate time, after big picture issues only the leadership can handle are addressed.



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LEGISLATIVE LINK UPDATE

Last Friday, United Way of Florida's computer network server "went down", and was not fixed until early this week. We apologize for not being able to get you last week's Legislative Link on a timely basis, and for any inconvenience it might have caused.

This week, like all final session weeks, has been frantic, at best. Because your Legislative Link authors have been submersed in the fray, we have not been able to pen a "typical" Legislative Link. Your final 2003 Legislative Session Wrap-Up will be provided to you within 30 days or so, after the dust has cleared from this final, hectic week. In addition, Legislative Link will provide coverage of any special sessions that are called.

Contact your Legislators!!!

**Do You Like the House Proposed 2003-2004 Budget?
Do You Like the Senate's?**

If your answer is "NO" to either of these questions, it is critically important that you contact your legislators ASAP to let them know. For example, if you support the Senate budget, call your Senators and tell them not to waiver, and perhaps to even add more to their budget. If you don't like the House budget, call your representatives and tell them they can do better. Or vice versa. Public pressure will make a critical difference in budget negotiations between now and the special session. Please make contacts next week.



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