



THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR BILL GALVANO
President

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators
FROM: Bill Galvano
SUBJECT: Vote on the General Appropriations Act
DATE: March 15, 2020

HB 5001, the 2020-21 General Appropriations Act (GAA) was published online this evening. In coordination with the Florida House, the Senate will convene at noon on Thursday, March 19, 2020, for the exclusive purpose of a vote on: HB 5001; HB 5003, Implementing the 2020-2021 General Appropriations Act; and, HB 5005, Collective Bargaining.

In addition to outlining a state budget for Fiscal Year 2020-21, which begins on July 1, the GAA contains significant current year funding the Governor has requested to help with ongoing efforts to prepare for and respond to the various impacts of COVID-19. Therefore, it is critical that we return to Tallahassee as soon as possible to vote on the budget and send it to the Governor.

Florida's Constitution and laws do not contemplate the Legislature conducting votes remotely. This public health emergency certainly provides reason to explore changes to our laws that may allow such an option in the future; however, as it relates to this vote, in the midst of a pandemic, I am not willing to risk a legal challenge that could prevent our budget from being promptly enacted.

We will take significant precautions to mitigate the risks associated with group gatherings. Staffing for the sitting will be minimal and limited to those staff specifically designated by the Chief of Staff, Secretary, Sergeant, Majority Office and Minority Office. We will also forgo a traditional Sine Die Ceremony in the rotunda. While the Capitol will remain open, members of the public are strongly encouraged to avoid congregating in the public gallery and the rotunda.

Senators who are showing any symptoms and those with underlying health conditions should contact the Chief of Staff regarding a requested absence. Thank you for your attention to these important matters.