



WEEK FOUR

MARCH 24-28, 2014

20TH ANNUAL DELTA DAYS AT THE CAPITOL

The fourth week of the 2014 Legislative Session began with an exuberant visit by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. My fellow Sorors filled the Florida Capitol with their unmistakable red and white colors for the 20th Annual Delta Days at the Capitol. The yearly event gathers Deltas from throughout the state to lobby the legislature on important issues affecting our communities, and I was honored to sponsor **Senate Resolution-1688** recognizing Delta Days at the Capitol.



*Delta Days at the Capitol
Members of DST Tampa Alumnae Chapter; Dr. Paulette Walker,
DST National President and Senator Joyner*

With five weeks remaining in the Legislative Session, the Senate Appropriations committee began our work on the state budget.

Senate Proposed Committee Bill 7090-Appropriations was introduced in committee with over 50 amendments to the General Appropriations Act. This bill sets the state budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014, and ending June 30, 2015, to pay for everything from teachers' salaries to basic operations of state government. The House and Senate will meet in conference committees to hammer out the differences in the two proposed budgets.

MY BILLS AND PRIORITIES

Since first taking office in 2011, Governor Rick Scott has set as one of his priorities the highly controversial purging of our state voter rolls. While he claimed the move was necessary to protect the elections process, critics, including myself, have long suspected that his actions were instead aimed at suppressing the vote by targeting minorities and other groups who tended to vote for Democrats. With the 2014 gubernatorial election looming, the governor once again announced his intention to resume his purging activities. Following a widespread outcry, he abruptly cancelled those plans this week, and his chief elections official announced that the purging would remain suspended until 2015. It is my hope that the suspension remains permanent.

Enacted in 2000, the "Closing the Gap" grant program, provides funding for projects targeted at reducing racial and ethnic disparities in mortality rates. My bill **SB 1412-Closing the Gap Grant Programs** adds sickle cell disease to the priority areas for this important program. Adding sickle cell disease will allow community organizations to seek funding for public education and counseling programs. The bill passed favorably in the Health Policy committee.

BILLS ON WATCH

- **Senate Bill 386-Application of Foreign Law in Certain Cases** by Senator Alan Hays would once again attempt to prohibit the use of "foreign" law in the Florida courts system - a troubling restriction which could impact such basic proceedings as divorce, for example, involving a Floridian married in a foreign country. The bill primarily targets an Islamic code known as "Sharia law" and is a solution looking for a problem. Islamic law is just one component of international law which, thanks to

globalization, is routinely considered in American courts, including Florida, to resolve such issues as contractual disputes. But the extent of its applicability is always dictated by American law in accordance with our Constitution.

- **Senate 926-Local Regulation of Wage Theft** by Senator Simpson provides one standard for county ordinances regulating wage theft and grandfathers in those county who already have ordinances. The bill was amended by Senator Soto to provide an additional option for counties to consider when formulating their wage theft ordinances.
- **Senate Bill 1276-Trauma Service Areas** by Senator Grimsley would allow certain trauma centers to remain in operation despite legal challenges by hospitals. It also temporarily stops outrageous trauma response fees currently charged by two for-profit trauma centers in Florida by imposing a \$15,000 cap for one year.
- **Senate Bill 156-Relating to Motor Vehicle and Mobile Home Taxes, Fees, and Surcharges** rolls back the higher fees for vehicle tag and registration renewals. In order to take advantage of these reductions, which start on September 1, 2014, if your tags or registrations need to be renewed before then, I urge that you only renew for only one year.
- **Senate Bill 392-State Speed Zones** by Senators Clemens and Brandes would increase the maximum allowable speed limit on certain highways and roadways under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation - a move I strongly oppose. Until we can find a way to better curb or eliminate road rage, texting while driving, and other deadly distractions, raising the speed limit may deliver us more quickly to a final destination we had not anticipated.
- **Senate Bill 274-Inmate Reentry** by Senator Simmons would ensure that every Florida-born inmate who leaves prison has a state identification card, a replacement identification card or replacement drivers license, and a certified copy of their birth certificate, at no cost to the inmate.



(L-R) Dr. Walter Smith, 7th President of FAMU; Majorie Turnbull; Dr. Larry Robinson, Interim President of FAMU; Senator Joyner; Dr. Lelia Walker; and Mr. Jason Smith, FAMU Student

ACTION IN THE SENATE CHAMBERS

Session convened on Tuesday, March 26, 2014. Fellow Democrat, Senator Dwight Bullard of Miami joined me in presenting **Senate Resolution-1690** recognizing FAMU Day at the Capitol. On the Session calendar for consideration were bills relating to warning shots, nursing home litigation, homeless youths, and safety regulations for the parasailing industry. The Senate also held its annual reunion to recognize former and current members, and pay tribute to those who have passed away.

Committee Assignments

Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice, Vice Chair;
Joint Committee on Public Counsel Oversight, Chair; Appropriations;
Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government; Ethics and Elections;
Health Policy; Judiciary; Transportation;
Select Committee on Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin

VISITORS TO THE CAPITOL



Craig Latimer, Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections and Senator Joyner



Members of PACE Pinellas County (L-R) Sally Zeh, Housh Ghovaei, Senator Joyner and Carla Mattern



Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department (L-R) Lorelei Bowden, Deputy Richard Livernois, Senator Joyner, and Major Curtis Flowers

Your Senator,
Arthenia L. Joyner
Serving District 19

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