



Senator Wilton Simpson

2013 Legislative Update

Senate District 18

Friends,

The Governor has finished reviewing the legislation from this year's session, and I am very pleased with what we were able to accomplish in my first Legislative Session. With hard work we were able to pass bills that will protect our military service members, spur the utilization of natural gas and increase infrastructure, result in reduction of regulations for local a manufacturing plant, fund the restoration of the Everglades, and remove burdensome regulations for the agricultural community.



It is because of everyone back home in District 18 that I am able to serve, and I can't thank everyone enough for the support you've given me through this process. It is your tax dollars that pay for my time in Tallahassee, and as such, I feel that you deserve to be informed with the details on what I worked on during the 2013 Legislative Session. Here is a short summary of some of the bills that I passed this Session that have been signed into law. If you would like more details, please don't hesitate to let me know.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wilton Simpson".

- Wilton Simpson

Military Protection Act (House Bill 1223)



Bill signing at MacDill AFB on 7/1/13.

This bill makes it clear that attempts to defraud or swindle military service members and their families will not be tolerated. Additional fines and penalties are created for perpetrators that target and victimize the people who are so bravely serving our country. Attorney General Pam Bondi saw a rise in this criminal activity and suggested this legislation to me. I was proud to work with her as the primary sponsor.

Full bill details:

<http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1223>

Natural Gas Vehicle Act (House Bill 579)

We must reduce our dependency on foreign oil, and with this bill, we will do it. This legislation provides a 5 year period of no taxes on natural gas in Florida. Additionally, during the same 5 year period, a Natural Gas Fleet Vehicle Incentive Program is created. Local governments and private entities can apply for a rebate of up to \$25,000 per vehicle after they've converted a fleet vehicle to use natural gas. Converting just one diesel truck to natural gas is equivalent to taking 300 cars off the road. This legislation is the right path for our environment and our economy.



One of the many CNG semi trucks that you will see more of on Florida's highways.

Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0579>

Wine Canister Act (House Bill 623)



Touring Micro Matic's Southeast headquarters in Brooksville, FL.

Florida was one of only two states that did not allow wine to be sold in canisters. The tap systems for these canisters are manufactured right here in Senate District 18. This legislation allows for the canisters to be bought and sold in Florida. Wine sold this way stays fresh longer and will allow restaurants to sell better wines by the glass. This is a win-win for our restaurants, consumers, the environment, and one of our own local manufacturing businesses.

Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0623>

Everglades Restoration Act (House Bill 7065)

The Everglades is a key component of Florida's past, present, and future. In fact, one in three Floridian's water supply is directly affected by what happens in the Everglades. Last year the governor and the federal government put politics aside and agreed on the final stage of the Everglades restoration. Their goal was to get out of the courtrooms and get the job of restoration done. This agreement resulted in a new plan that farmers, environmentalists and policymakers have all celebrated. This bill will make certain Florida statutes conform to this new restoration plan. The Everglades Act of 2013 provides \$32 million in funding each year to ensure that restoration is completed.



Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/7065>

Utility Theft (Senate Bill 338)

Electricity theft is a growing problem for Florida's utilities. Stronger laws were needed to deter electricity theft. Under this legislation, the penalties for theft will vary depending upon the value of the electricity that was stolen. Since utilities have regularly had to build the cost of theft into their standard rates for all customers, this bill will go a long way toward protecting consumers from larger rate hikes.

Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/0338>

Greenbelt Act (House Bill 1193)

This legislation removes some of the bureaucracy from the process of having and maintaining a greenbelt exemption for agricultural properties. This bill eliminates a Value Adjustment Board's authority to review and remove a land classification under its own motion. It also eliminates qualifications used by property appraisers in reclassifying property from agricultural to nonagricultural. In addition, it removes from law a county commission's authority to reclassify property from agricultural to nonagricultural in an effort to expand urban development.

Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1193>

Fire Marshal Deregulation Act - (Senate Bill 1122)

This legislation gives relief from government regulation to the agricultural and small business communities by exempting structures located on agricultural property from the Florida Fire Prevention Code. The criteria for exemption includes the following: the property owner is responsible for having no more than 35 people in the building at any given time, the building is not to be used by the public for direct sales or as an educational outreach facility, and the structure may not be used for residential purposes. The bill also changes the law so that one-story or two-story structures that are less than 10,000 square feet, whose occupancies are defined as business or mercantile, will be guided by the Florida Building Code, and not the Fire Code.

Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1122>

Senator Simpson's Co-Sponsored Bills

Cancer Treatment Fairness Act of 2013 by Majority Leader Lizbeth Benacquisto (Senate Bill 422/Passed in HB 1159)

This legislation corrects the disparity in treatment costs by requiring coverage of oral medication in addition to intravenous medications.



Leader Benacquisto's press release for the Cancer Treatment Fairness Act on 3/07/2013.

Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1159>

Ethics Reform Package (Senate Bill 2)

This bill will increase transparency by placing elected official's financial disclosures online, increasing the Commission on Ethics Authority, and placing restrictions on CCE's, among other reforms.

Full bill details: <http://flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2013/1159>

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