



Senator Wilton Simpson

Weekly Update

Senate District 18

Weeks:

March 11th – March 15th, 2013

March 18th – March 22nd, 2013

Friends,

Session is now in full swing, and my legislation is moving through committees. My first bill that I presented before a committee, Senate Bill 338 (Theft of Utility Services), has unanimously passed through all of its committees and will head to the Senate floor for voting this Wednesday. Utilities need stronger laws to deter utility theft and to help utilities minimize losses due to theft that currently must be recovered through increased rates, and with this legislation we will better fight this growing problem.



Speaking at the Florida Association of
Special Districts Luncheon (3/20/13)

My retirement reform bill (SB1392) has passed through its first two committees, passing its first committee with unanimous support on March 14th. This bill will revamp Florida's retirement system to give more of our state employees the option of having control of their own financial future just as their peers do in the private sector. These common sense changes respect the retirement choices of our hardworking employees, while ultimately helping us to increase the pension fund's long-term sustainability. This bill will next head to the Appropriations Committee to be heard on Thursday.

Last week, the Everglades Restoration Act (SB768) received bipartisan support in the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee. The adopted amendment represents an unprecedented compromise between environmental groups, farmers, and policymakers. This legislation makes crystal clear the commitment to adequately funding the Everglades Restoration Plan that was agreed upon by the State of Florida and the federal government, and I am very excited to be a part of this landmark agreement. The House companion bill

(HB7065) unanimously passed on the House floor last Friday, and I look forward to shepherding this legislation through the Senate.

I'd like to invite you to visit my webpage at <http://flsenate.gov/Senators/s18> where you can view all of the bills that I am working on during this year's session, sign up to get my media alerts in real time, see more details about my legislation, and track them to see how they progress through committees. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with your questions or concerns at: simpson.wilton.web@flsenate.gov.

Regards,
Wilton



I had the pleasure of meeting with the Senate Pages last week.

Senate Committee Unanimously Passes Senator Simpson's Retirement Bill

On March 14th, Senator Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby) presented Senate Bill 1392, aimed at revamping Florida's current retirement system. This legislation received bipartisan support and a unanimous vote in its first committee. "It was encouraging to hear testimony from a wide variety of stakeholders who all voiced support for this legislation," said Senator Simpson. Senate Bill 1392 passed its second committee, and will be heading to its final Senate committee stop. "I look forward to continuing the discussion as the bill moves forward in the Appropriations Committee next week."

The Senate bill makes four changes, effective January 1, 2014:

- 1) All newly hired employees in the Regular and Special Risk Classes who have never previously participated in the state retirement system continue to have a choice between the pension plan and the investment plan. If the new member fails to make an active election, the member will default into the Investment Plan.
- 2) All newly elected officials and newly hired employees within the Senior Management Service Class who have never previously participated in the FRS will be required to enroll in the investment plan.

- 3) The vesting period for the pension plan will be increased from eight years to ten years for members initially enrolling on or after January 1, 2014. The vesting period for the investment plan will remain one year.
 - 4) Beginning January 1, 2014, all employees participating in the investment plan will contribute 2% of their salary towards retirement. Employees participating in the pension plan will continue to contribute 3%.
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Everglades Restoration Act Unanimously Passes Senate Environmental Committee

Last Thursday, the Everglades Restoration Act (SB 768) received bipartisan support in the Senate Environmental Preservation Committee. Filed by Senator Wilton Simpson (R-Trilby), the amendment that was adopted represents an unprecedented compromise between environmental groups, farmers and policymakers. This legislation makes crystal clear the commitment to adequately funding the Everglades Restoration plan that was agreed to by the State of Florida and the federal government.

“It is exciting to be a part of this landmark agreement. The Everglades is an integral part of what makes Florida unique,” said Senator Simpson. “The passage of this legislation will allow for the continued restoration and protection of this delicate ecosystem while allowing farmers to responsibly grow food through utilization of best management practices. I commend all the stakeholders who worked so hard to get to where we are today.

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