



Senator Wilton Simpson

Weekly Update

Senate District 18

March 25th – March 29th, 2013
April 1st – April 5th, 2013

Friends,

The last two weeks in Tallahassee have been very productive. Last Wednesday, my natural gas bill, Senate Bill 560, as well as Senate Bill 928, which deals with affordable housing, both passed the Finance and Tax Subcommittee. Both bills will next head to the Appropriations Committee for their final committee hearing before the floor.



Last week, my utility theft bill (SB 338) passed the full Senate with a unanimous and bipartisan vote. The companion bill has been placed on the House of Representative's calendar to be read on the floor.

On Thursday, March 28, Senate Bill 1392, which will revamp the Florida Retirement System, passed the Senate Appropriations Committee. This committee was this bill's last committee assignment in the Senate. It will next be added to the calendar to be heard on the Senate floor. There has been quite a bit of misinformation regarding my retirement bill so if you or someone you know has questions, please contact my Tallahassee office.

Last Wednesday, I had the pleasure of meeting with dentists from around District 18 and from the Tampa Bay Area. I enjoyed hearing about the legislative priorities of the industry from a local perspective.





Matt Davis, President of the UF Collegiate Veterans Society, on Gator Day in Tallahassee. (4/4/13)

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

Everglades Restoration Act Moves Forward

Last Tuesday, the Community Affairs Committee unanimously passed legislation that solidifies a long-term plan to institute the last phase of an Everglades restoration project. My bill (SB 768) will allow for the continued restoration and protection of this delicate ecosystem while allowing farmers to operate responsibly by utilizing best management practices.



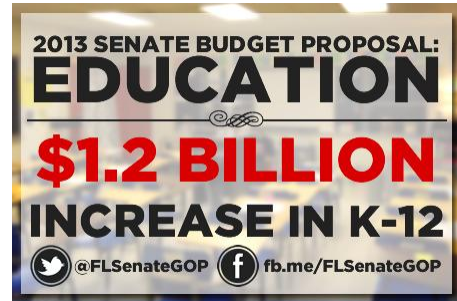
The Everglades Restoration Act aims to ensure that the state meets federal water quality standards in the Everglades by reducing pollutants and provides sufficient funding for restoration projects. Environmentalists, the agriculture industry, and lawmakers throughout the state have heralded the plan as a sustainable solution to restoring our state's precious resource. Our Republican caucus looks forward to working with our colleagues in the House and the Governor to enact this important legislation.

Florida Senate Unanimously Passes Utility Theft Legislation

On Thursday, April 4, the Florida Senate unanimously passed Senator Simpson's Utility Theft legislation (SB 338). "Electricity theft is a growing problem for Florida's utilities. We need stronger laws to deter electricity theft and to help utilities minimize losses due to theft that have historically been recovered through increased rates," said Senator Simpson. "Currently, regardless of the dollar value of the electricity that is stolen, energy theft is a misdemeanor. With the passage of this legislation, penalties will vary depending upon the value of the electricity that was stolen. This bill will go a long way in protecting consumers from rate hikes."

The Florida Senate Goes All In for Education

Education was a top priority last week with three important bills being heard on the Floor and the unveiling of the Senate's Budget Allocations for the fiscal year of 2013-2014. Throughout the year, Senators John Legg (R-Lutz), Bill Galvano (R-Bradenton), Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland), and Anitere Flores (R-Miami), have taken the lead on bills that will make a big difference for students and teachers. Additionally, the Senate released budget recommendations for the 2013-2014 fiscal year this week that would increase overall Education funding by \$1.6 billion. These increases make strategic investments in our teachers, with \$480 million in teacher salary increases, \$75 million to provide wireless connectivity for schools, and \$48 million to expand opportunities for industry certifications for K-12 students. The Senate is keenly focused on lashing education to jobs to ensure more students are college and workforce ready.



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322 Senate Office Building | 404 South Monroe Street | Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
Phone: 850.487.5018 | Email: simpson.wilton.web@flsenate.gov