



Senator Wilton Simpson

Session Update

Senate District 18

April 3, 2014

Good afternoon,

This year's Legislative Session kicked off on March 4th, and the month of March has been a busy one in Tallahassee. On March 12th, I had the pleasure of meeting with county officials for Pasco County Day at the Capitol, and on March 19th I met with county officials for Hernando County Day. My son joined me for a week in Tallahassee during his spring break, and I've been privileged to meet with numerous constituents who made the trip to visit me and my fellow legislators at the Capitol.



Senator Simpson, and his son Wilton, Jr. on the floor of the Senate Chamber.

Many of my bills have been progressing through the committee process. If you'd like to take a look at the full list of the 27 bills I have sponsored for this year's Legislative Session, please [visit my senate webpage](#) and click on "Bills Introduced" as seen below:



In addition to seeing the details of the bills that I have filed, you can track them to see how they progress through committees, and sign up to get my media alerts in real time. I will also be posting updates on Facebook regularly during this year's Legislative Session, and remember that there is a trivia question each Friday ([click here to visit my Facebook](#)). As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me with your questions or concerns at: simpson.wilton.web@flsenate.gov.

Regards,
Wilton

Consumer Water Protection Act Unanimously Passes Appropriations



The Summertree Water Alliance made the trip to Tallahassee to testify during the first committee stop of SB 272 in January.

On March 13th, the Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously passed Senate Bill 272, the Consumer Water Protection Act. This bill has now passed all of its assigned committees and will next head to the full membership of the Senate for a vote.

This legislation will yield two essential outcomes. First, clearly identified secondary water quality standards that directly relate to the taste, color and smell of water will be created and

considered when a utility requests a rate increase. Second, it creates a process that allows 65% or more of the customers in a service area to petition the PSC if the quality of their water or water service is unsatisfactory. The bill requires a utility to provide an estimate of the costs and benefits of plausible solutions for each concern that the PSC finds, meet with the consumers to discuss the costs and solutions, and periodically give the PSC reports on the progress of implementation. The final tool if the utility fails to comply with PSC orders is probation or revocation of the utility's certificate of authority.

“One of the main reasons that I’ve filed this legislation is because the people I represent have asked me to help them with a serious situation,” said Senator Simpson. “The people in the Summertree community have no other option for water services aside from one private company. They are forced to pay rates that are much higher than what other Pasco County residents are paying,” said Senator Simpson. “These citizens are paying substantially more for water that meets the minimum primary water quality standards. What I have learned is that these standards do not address the water’s taste, color, or smell. It is unfair for Florida residents, such as the people of Summertree, to pay more for this kind of water. It is time that we put consumers first and require private utilities to provide better water at a fair price.”

For more information, or to track this bill, visit: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2014/0272>

Senate Bill 312 Passes First Three Committees

Senate Bill 312 will provide some tax relief for Florida's hardworking farmers. It will allow agricultural lands that are used in water retention programs to retain their agricultural classification. This practice of water farming is a key element in increasing our use of reclaimed water. The bill will expand the sales tax exemption for power farm equipment to include power farm equipment used for storage of raw products, irrigation equipment, and repairs to farm and irrigation equipment. In addition, SB 312 will provide a sales tax exemption for trailers used in agricultural production for sales prices below \$20,000. "This bill will help reduce some of the tax burden that our farmers face, making Florida a more agriculture-friendly state," said Senator Simpson.

For more information, or to track this bill, visit: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2014/0312>

Senate Memorial 368 Calls for Single-Subject Amendment

Currently, 41 states including Florida have a single subject provision in their constitution, which states that any state-level legislation passed must deal with only one subject. The purpose of Senate Memorial 368, filed by Senator Wilton Simpson, is to urge Congress (our friends in D.C.) to call a convention for the purpose of proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to provide that every law enacted by Congress should embrace only one subject, which should be clearly expressed in its title. A single subject amendment would eliminate unrelated language in important bills, reduce pork barrel spending, and increase the institutional accountability of Congress.

For more information, or to track this bill, visit: <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2014/0368>



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Vehicle Registration Fee Reduction Passes Legislature

During week three of Session, I worked with my fellow legislators to ensure Florida is the best place to live, work, raise a family and retire. In a unanimous vote, Senate Bill 156, which reduces certain annual vehicle registration fees by nearly \$400 million, passed off the Senate floor. As Florida's economy continues to recover, this bill gives broad-based tax relief that will be felt by every Floridian who drives a car or truck for years to come. The legislation later passed the Florida House and has been signed by the Governor. Fees will be reduced starting on September 1, 2014.



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Senate Passes Florida GI Bill Honoring Military Service Members



More than 1.5 million veterans, 61,000 active duty military personnel and nearly 12,000 Florida National Guard members and their families call Florida home. During the week of March 10th, the Florida Legislature took time to honor these American heroes during the 2014 National Guard Day at the Capitol. As uniformed soldiers gathered in the Capitol, the Senate remembered the veterans, the fallen heroes and the brave men and women who dedicated their lives to protecting our freedom.

On March 11th, the Senate took up and unanimously passed the Florida GI Bill, House Bill 7015. This bill seeks to establish Florida as the top "Welcome Home" state for the military, veterans and their families. This important bill not only expands education and employment opportunities for veterans but also adds more protections to Florida's military infrastructure. As a top priority for the Florida Legislature during the 2014 Session, this bill was approved and signed by the Governor on March 31st.



2014 Legislative Session

Regular Session Convened: March 4th 2013

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