



THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR BEN ALBRITTON
President

For Immediate Release
May 2, 2025

Contact: Katie Betta
(850) 487-5229

President Albritton's Statement on the 60th Day of the 2025 Legislative Session
*Senate President comments on significant legislation passed over the last 60 days, affirms
commitment to a balanced budget & broad-based tax relief*

Tallahassee—Florida Senate President Ben Albritton (R-Wauchula) today marked the 60th Day of the 2025 Legislative Session. Ongoing work to complete the 2025-26 General Appropriations Act and bills related to the state budget will continue in the coming weeks.

President Albritton's Remarks to Senators:

"I'm grateful for your tremendous work this session. You brought input from Floridians across the state to Tallahassee and crafted key initiatives to improve our child welfare system, enhance services for veterans, strengthen school safety protections, and create specialized education opportunities for families who have a child with Autism.

"With feedback and suggestions from families and law enforcement, we are expanding mental health diversion options within Florida's criminal justice system.

"Improved oversight of administrative rules will go a long way towards keeping government more accountable to Floridians, while comprehensive hurricane response and recovery legislation increases support for Florida homeowners rebuilding after a storm and improves disaster management planning for the future.

"We are providing flexibility to condo owners and associations, while ensuring critical repairs and maintenance are made and safety is prioritized. And we are protecting voter information and safeguarding the process by which constitutional amendments are placed on the ballot for consideration by Florida voters. Meanwhile, legislation passed earlier this year to support enforcement of federal immigration law is being implemented across the state by our hardworking and dedicated law enforcement officers.

"There is no question we have more work to do. I'm pleased to share with you that we have reached a framework for a budget plan and a tentative schedule to move forward. Floridians expect and deserve a balanced budget that reduces state spending, lowers per capita spending, and reduces the growth of state bureaucracy. I am committed to working with our partners in the Florida House to pass a budget that reduces debt, accounts for significant, broad-based tax relief,

and maintains historic state reserves for emergencies. I'm also personally committed to the new reporting requirements throughout the budget that I've been talking about this session.

"As part of our agreement with the House, we will take up the most historic tax relief package in the history of our state. This includes \$2.8 billion in tax relief. We have a responsibility to safeguard taxpayer dollars and improve accountability, transparency, and oversight of government spending. Floridians can count on us to get the job done."

Highlights of the 2025 Regular Session include the following:

Comprehensive Autism Support Legislation, New Opportunities for Floridians with Autism and their Families

SB 112 by Senator Harrell promotes early detection, specialized education programs

Senate Bill (SB) 112, Children with Developmental Disabilities, by Senator Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) increases opportunities for early detection, intervention, and support for children with autism and their families. The legislation also creates a coordinated state approach to research, training and public awareness of autism spectrum disorder by designating the Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment at the University of Florida as a statewide hub for autism research, services, and best practices.

"As more and more families across our state are facing a diagnosis of Autism, this bill offers new support from all angles, coordinating research and training, expanding early detection, and increasing education opportunities and other treatment services," said President Albritton. "As always, parents are in control and equipped to make the best decisions to help children reach their full potential."

"Research is clear. Early detection and intervention services promote positive outcomes for infants, toddlers, and children with a disability or developmental delay. This good bill gives parents the opportunity to continue critical early intervention services provided through the Early Steps Program until their child turns four and begins receiving services provided through the school district," said Senator Harrell. "Currently, there are about 66,000 students with Autism in our public school system. Specific training for our instructional personnel will help these students develop key reading, language, and math skills. Additionally, by developing summer programs designed specifically for children with Autism, we can help parents find summer camps and other activities that can accommodate the specific needs of a child with autism, ensuring year-round continuity of care."

The Tristin Murphy Act

SB 168 by Senator Bradley expands mental health diversion options within Florida's criminal justice system.

SB 168, The Tristin Murphy Act, sponsored by Senator Jennifer Bradley (R-Fleming Island) creates model processes for diverting defendants to mental health treatment. The legislation is

named after Tristin Murphy who tragically took his own life in a Florida prison in 2021. Tristin's parents, Cindee and Dennis Murphy, joined Senators in the Chamber for the bill's passage earlier in session.

"Tristin's parents and his son, Cody, have been so brave to tell his story and advocate for improvements to the way offenders with a mental health challenge are treated within the criminal justice system. Learning about Tristin's story and spending time with his parents had a profound impact on me," said President Albritton. "There is a big difference between a hardened criminal and someone who needs intervention to address a serious mental health challenge. This bill strikes a balance that gives law enforcement more options to keep our communities safe."

"It was an honor to have Cindee and Dennis with us this session. Their tragedy has inspired so many to take action to help people struggling with mental illness get the help they need. If someone commits a serious, violent crime, they need to be incarcerated for public safety. This bill provides a different path for less serious crimes where the defendant, their family, and the community would be better served by allowing the defendant to receive the necessary mental health treatment," said Senator Bradley. "We are grateful to Cindee and Dennis, law enforcement leaders, and many others who worked together to develop the model processes outlined in this legislation."

Key Child Welfare Legislation

SB 7012 by Senator Grall helps recruit case managers, creates a professional foster care pilot program and combats child sex trafficking.

SB 7012, Child Welfare, by Senator Erin Grall (R-Vero Beach) expands data collection to combat child exploitation, creates a recruitment program for child welfare professionals, and establishes a professional foster care pilot program to better serve children with high behavioral acuity.

"Data is clear that the faster we can get traumatized children into loving, permanent homes, the better off those children will be in the long run. As hard as we try, government can never replace the role of family. But, we're dedicated to working hard to be part of the solution," said President Albritton. "We know vicious and immoral criminals are out there each and every day in search of new ways to evade our laws and exploit vulnerable children. The more data we have on when and how this evil is happening, the better chance we have to stay one step ahead of these predators and keep vulnerable children safe. Children are our future, and we are fighting together for their safety."

"We know children can struggle in group homes and more so in institutionalized settings, but benefit, and even thrive, when placed with a family. Florida needs more family-like foster placements for children with high behavioral needs. The professional foster care pilot program will help us identify specifically trained foster families willing to care for a child with unique needs," said Senator Grall. "Additionally, this bill provides tremendous opportunities for retirees to stay involved in their communities through the Child Welfare System. This legislation will

help Florida recruit retired law enforcement officers, emergency first responders, military servicemembers, teachers, health care practitioners, and others who have specific training and skills honed over their careers in other fields that will benefit vulnerable children in state care.”

Increasing Veterans Support Services

SB 116 by Senator Burgess expands statewide outreach and support for veterans and families

SB 116, Veterans, by Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) expands support services for veterans and their families, with a focus on mental health training and increasing the availability of Adult Day Health Care Programs that serve veterans who require full-time care.

“We know our elderly veterans and those with disabilities can have a better quality of life the longer they can live at home with their families. However, around-the-clock care can be difficult for families who work outside of the home. By expanding options for adult day health care programs for veterans, we can provide daytime and respite care for veterans while their family members are at work or attending to other responsibilities,” said Senator Burgess, who previously served as Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs (FDVA) and currently serves as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves.

“Programs like adult day-time care support families who want to keep a disabled or elderly family member in the home and foster a sense of community where everyone is honored and respected. Expanding adult day-time care opportunities for families is unfinished business from my time in the Florida House and FDVA. I know this bill will go a long way towards addressing this need in our communities,” Senator Burgess continued.

“One veteran suicide is one too many. I’m pleased to see this legislation expand mental health training so we can more easily identify veterans who are struggling,” said President Albritton. “They have been through so much in service to our country. The more we can provide outreach and coordinate services, the better we can show our appreciation for their sacrifice.”

Robust Hurricane Relief, Recovery, and Response Legislation

SB 180 by Senator DiCeglie helps Floridians to rebuild and fortify homes and enhances resiliency planning and emergency readiness.

SB 180, Emergencies, by Senator Nick DiCeglie (R-Indian Rocks Beach) bolsters hurricane relief and recovery and enhances response efforts in Florida. The bill supports Florida homeowners rebuilding after a storm with clear, streamlined permitting resources and clarification about rebuilding guidelines to ensure families can make the repairs they need without being hit with a higher tax bill. The bill also increases disaster management planning, emergency resource coordination, financial transparency, and reporting across state and local government disaster management entities.

“Multiple major hurricanes ravaged Florida last year, leaving extensive damage statewide,” said Senator DiCeglie, whose hometown and district were among the hardest hit during the 2024

Hurricane Season. "After a storm, Floridians need a clear path to recovery, not roadblocks. When local bureaucracy overshadows the needs of citizens, Floridians are left picking up the pieces. We're fighting for families to focus on rebuilding without additional delays or burdens, especially for those who sustained damage or lost their homes. Working with our state and local emergency responders, we can streamline restoration efforts and improve emergency response coordination, fortifying and strengthening our communities before the next storm."

"Florida has set a high bar as the nation's model in storm response and recovery," said President Albritton, whose district experienced major inland flooding and agriculture and citrus loss during the 2024 Hurricane Season. "It's a testament to our first responders and emergency personnel, as well as the strength and resilience of Floridians in the aftermath of a devastating hurricane. We can always do better. We are incorporating lessons learned and identifying new opportunities to support community restoration and enhance disaster management through proactive planning and coordination. Through these initiatives, Floridians can focus on what matters most: rebuilding their homes, their lives, and their communities."

Enhancing Transparency & Government Oversight

SB 108 by Senator Grall modernizes Florida's administrative rulemaking process and improves transparency of state licensing.

SB 108, Administrative Procedures, by Senator Grall, improves government oversight and accountability, creating a clear, consistent, annual process for review and repeal of administrative rules. SB 108 also increases transparency for state licensing by creating requirements for tracking agency compliance with statutory timeframes to ensure Floridians applying for a license are approved in a timely manner.

"Under this bill our state agencies will complete a five-year rule review process. The agencies will review twenty percent of their rules each year, which is a reasonable and consistent timeline to ensure full and complete review every five years. This new process improves oversight and accountability for everyone involved, including the Legislature. It is our responsibility to make sure the bills we pass are being implemented properly, so we can make changes if needed. Creating consistent mechanisms for review, updates, and changes allows the Legislature to more meaningfully monitor the rulemaking process," said Senator Grall.

"Improved oversight of administrative rules will go a long way towards keeping government more accountable to Floridians. One of the reasons DOGE has become so popular at the federal level is that Americans have a problem with the idea that unelected federal bureaucrats have so much unchecked authority. We are a state and nation of laws created by elected officials accountable to the people, not an administrative state controlled by appointed professional staff. Florida government is not, and should not, be immune to this kind of scrutiny. This legislation modernizes Florida's rulemaking process to better serve our state," said President Albritton.

Protecting Voters, Improving Petition Initiative Security and Transparency

HB 1205 by President Gaetz and Senator Grall safeguards personal identifying information of Florida voters and creates strong penalties for criminals who seek to undermine the constitutional amendment process.

HB 1205 (SB 7016), Amendments to the State Constitution, by Senator Don Gaetz (R-Crestview) who served as Senate President from 2012-2014, and Senator Grall reduces fraud, protects voter information, and safeguards the process by which constitutional amendments are placed on the ballot for consideration by Florida voters.

“We are all proud that here in the free state of Florida, citizens have the opportunity to place constitutional amendments on the ballot by petition. Amending Florida’s Constitution is a responsibility every voter takes very seriously, and petition integrity is critical to ensuring the effectiveness of the citizen initiative process. This legislation increases transparency and accountability for sponsors of initiatives; deters, prevents, and penalizes fraudulent activities; and, provides voters with objective information about the financial impacts of proposed amendments at the front end of the process. I appreciate President Gaetz and Senator Grall taking the lead on this key legislation for the Senate,” said President Albritton

“Investigations conducted by the Office of Election Crimes and Security have shown that agents of political committees sponsoring initiative petitions engaged in illegal and fraudulent activities while gathering petition signatures in the leadup to the 2024 General Election,” said President Gaetz. “There are numerous instances of petition circulators being paid per signature, signing petition forms on behalf of deceased individuals, forging or misrepresenting voter signatures on petition forms, using voters’ personal identifying information without consent, committing perjury, and swearing false oaths. Our bill guards against this kind of strategic and deliberate malfeasance with strong penalties for those who willfully disregard our laws.”

“Sponsors of initiative petitions have a fiduciary duty under our laws, and yet some have failed to cooperate with investigations and attempted to deflect responsibility for the criminal actions of petition circulators. Meanwhile, the Office of Election Crimes and Security received complaints from Florida voters whose personal information was fraudulently submitted on forms for at least four initiative petitions circulated for the 2024 General Election,” said Senator Grall. “Petition circulators were able to obtain personal identifying information required for a petition using publicly available data to commit identity theft and fraudulently complete petitions. Existing fines and penalties appear to be inadequate deterrents. We have to do more. This legislation adds important guardrails that protect Florida voters and the integrity of the petition gathering process.”

Ensuring Condo Safety, Accountability, Transparency

HB 913 by Senator Bradley and Senator Pizzo maintains post-Surfside safety requirements with flexibility to prioritize important repairs first.

SB 1742/HB 913, Condominium and Cooperative Associations, by Senator Jennifer Bradley (R-Fleming Island) and co-introduced by Senator Jason Pizzo (NPA-Sunny Isles Beach) enhances oversight, accountability, and transparency of condominium associations, while providing flexibility that ensures critical repairs and maintenance are made and safety is prioritized.

“This legislation is the product of many months of work, led by Senator Bradley and Senator Pizzo, to address concerns and incorporate feedback from condo owners, associations, local governments, state regulators, our dedicated partners in the Florida House, and many other stakeholders,” said President Albritton. “Condominium living is, particularly in our coastal areas, an iconic and highly sought-after way of life, including for many seniors retiring to our state. Everyone shares the goal of ensuring our condos are safe for residents who have made significant investments in these properties. I’m grateful to Senator Bradley and Senator Pizzo for leading this critical effort in the Senate.”

“Without moving one step backwards on safety, this bill provides options, flexibility, and relief so condo owners and associations can prioritize the most important repairs first, including safety issues identified during milestone inspections. They can then take a pause to catch up by reducing reserve funding temporarily, or obtaining a line of credit in lieu of reserves for a limited period,” said Senator Bradley. “We create strong protections for conflict of interest by requiring disclosure for professionals who bid on a SIRS if they intend to bid on any of the resulting work. Likewise, anyone completing the work must disclose any interest or relation to the company that performed the SIRS. Those are just a few examples of ways the bill addresses feedback and implementation challenges, while at the same time maintaining needed safety requirements that protect condo residents and communities.”

Strengthening School Safety Protections

SB 1470 by Senator Danny Burgess enhances school safety requirements and improves statewide coordination to protect students and teachers

SB 1470, School Safety, by Senator Danny Burgess (R-Zephyrhills) strengthens school safety measures, expands oversight of school security personnel, and clarifies campus security requirements to safeguard students and faculty.

“Every Florida student deserves to feel safe at school. And every parent should be able to put their children on the school bus, or drop them off at school in the morning, without worrying about whether or not they will make it home that evening,” said Senator Burgess. “Safety should never be left up to chance. Strengthened security measures across Florida schools will foster a safer environment for students to learn. By improving coordination and creating more uniformity with how protocols are implemented, we can bolster campus protections and further prioritize the safety of both students and staff. Every year we are incorporating lessons learned and looking for

improvements. Florida families expect us to get this right. We can't and we won't let them down."

"Over the last several years, the Legislature has partnered with local school districts and law enforcement to determine steps we can take to keep our schools safe. With input from parents, teachers, school administrators, and law enforcement, including Sheriff Bob Gualtieri, who chairs the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission, this legislation builds on our track record of continuous improvement in school safety," said President Albritton. "A secure school environment is vital to academic success for our students. Strengthening school safety training requirements will help safeguard students and faculty and give families peace of mind that their children are safe during the school day."

Protecting Private Property and Critical Infrastructure

HB1121 (SB 1422), Unmanned Aircraft or Unmanned Aircraft Systems, sponsored by Senator Keith Truenow (R-Tavares) protects private property and critical infrastructure facilities by enhancing penalties for unauthorized drone usage.

"Floridians deserve peace of mind and a sense of privacy on their own property. Similarly, it is vital that we take steps to protect critical infrastructure facilities that provide energy to communities across our state," said Senator Truenow. "This commonsense bill enhances penalties for bad actors who violate the property rights of Floridians and put the security of our infrastructure at risk."

"As technology continues to evolve, the ways in which we protect Floridians and our state's infrastructure must evolve with it," said President Albritton. "Private property rights are a fundamental pillar of our American republic, and the Florida Senate is committed to protecting those rights and empowering Floridians to do the same."

For more information, please visit www.FLSenate.gov.

###