



News You Can Use  
from State Senator  
Audrey Gibson

2018  
Post Session in Review



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Dear Constituent and Friend,

The 2018 Legislative Session has come to an end and I **THANK YOU** for the opportunity to serve you in the Florida Senate.

After an extended Session, the Senate and House came together on differences in their spending plans, to pass the State's roughly \$89 billion budget, see budget here [2018-2019 budget](#). A few budgetary highlights include:

- Personal Needs Allowance for long-term care residents increased from \$105 to \$130 per month
- Affordable Housing Programs \$15 million for workforce housing to serve low-income persons
- City of Jacksonville Crosswalk Countdown Heads \$631,072
- City of Jacksonville McCoy's Creek Project \$200,000
- Edward Waters College College Promise Program \$356,000
- Mary Brogan Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program \$1,828,325
- Five Star Veterans Center Homeless Housing and Re-integration Project \$150,000
- St. Johns River and Keystone Heights Lake \$25 million
- Family Support Services of North Florida - Services to At-Risk Youth of Those in Out of Home Care \$256,000
- Wayman Community Development At-Risk Services Program \$150,000

On the Senate Floor:

**SB 100: Taxes and Fees for Veterans and Low-income Persons** eliminates the \$1 and \$2 fees for a veteran to receive a "Veteran" designation on his or her driver license or identification card. The bill also exempts active duty military, veterans, spouses of veterans and low-income persons from certain local business taxes. Status: awaiting the Governor's signature.

**SB 648: Employment Services for Persons with Disabilities** provides for participants in adult or youth work experience programs operated by the Division of Blind Services (DBS) and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to be considered employees of the state for the purposes of workers' compensation coverage. This important benefit helps to increase participants' independence and self-sufficiency and protects them should an injury occur during their time at work. Status: awaiting the Governor's signature.



Rep. Kamia Brown visits the Senate as her house companion bill **HB 1009** to my senate bill **SB 1184** passes adding Lupus to the Closing the Gap Grant Program



In debate on the Senate floor

**SB 7028: Ratification of Department of Elderly Affairs Rules** and **SB 7030: Ratification of Agency for Health Care Administration Rules**

referred to as "Emergency Environmental Control for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities" requires, each nursing home and assisted living facility to acquire an alternative power source to ensure that temperatures are maintained at 81 degrees Fahrenheit or cooler in a sufficient portion of the facility to accommodate all of the facility's residents in the event of a power outage. In addition each facility must implement policies and procedures to ensure that resident's do not suffer complications from heat exposure. Nursing homes will be required to have backup power capability and adequate fuel supplies to maintain safety systems and equipment needed to maintain indoor air temperatures for 96 hours after a loss of electricity. Implementation begins June 1, 2018. Conversely, there is a sales tax exemption on necessary equipment purchases for nursing homes and assisted living facilities, which covers **July 1, 2017**, through December 31, 2018. Status: awaiting the Governor's signature.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, these policies and procedures are in place to help ensure the safety of our most vulnerable during and after an emergency.



Lincoln High School JROTC members participated in Military Day at The Capitol



FAMU Developmental Research School (DRS) JROTC members participated in Military Day at The Capitol

**SB 1392: Prearrest Diversion Programs** requires the establishment of prearrest diversion programs, like civil citations or similar prearrest programs for adults and juveniles, in each judicial circuit across the state. Currently, not all circuits have prearrest programs, which have proven data that the programs reduce recidivism.

This bill primarily spares first-time offenders who commit minor crimes from the dire consequences of entering the criminal justice system. Implementation of prearrest diversion promotes public safety, creates a positive impact in communities and removes roadblocks to gainful employment.

I am hopeful the Governor will sign this important reform legislation.



Dr. Ava Phoenix accepted my invitation to be Doctor of the Day in the Florida Senate

Mark your calendars:

- **Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday** 3-day sales tax holiday from August 3, 2018, through August 5, 2018.
- **Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday** 7-day sales tax holiday from June 1, 2018, through June 7, 2018 for specified items related to disaster preparedness.

Helpful link:

To track specific legislation, you can visit [Florida Senate 2018 legislation](#)

If you have questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact my office.

**As always, it is an Honor and a Pleasure to serve you in the Florida Senate!**

Sincerely,

Audrey Gibson  
State Senator  
District 6

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