

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/CS/SB 2006 — Emergency Management

by Rules Committee; Appropriations Committee; and Senator Burgess

The bill better equips Florida to address a pandemic or other public health emergency, prohibits requirements of COVID-19-vaccination documentation to access, enter, or receive service from businesses, governmental entities, and educational institutions, and protects Floridians from local orders that unnecessarily infringe rights or liberties in the name of addressing a purported emergency.

The bill requires state agencies to take the following actions to prepare for the next public health emergency:

- The Department of Health must create a state public health emergency management plan, and requires the Division of Emergency Management to incorporate that plan into the state’s comprehensive emergency management plan; and
- The Division of Emergency Management must:
 - Maintain an inventory of state-owned personal protective equipment; and
 - Include provisions in its statewide emergency shelter plan to address sheltering during a pandemic that requires distancing.

The bill also provides additional transparency and legislative oversight of the executive branch’s emergency powers. The bill:

- Limits emergency orders, proclamations, and rules to 60-day durations that can be renewed as long as the emergency conditions persist;
- Requires the Governor, if he or she closes schools or businesses, to state specific reasons why the schools or businesses need to close and reassess the closure regularly; and
- Authorizes the Legislature to pass a concurrent resolution to terminate orders and directives issued under a state of emergency, instead of just the state of emergency itself.

The bill also targets county and city emergency orders that address purported emergencies but that also infringe the rights or liberties of Floridians. To protect Floridians from these orders the bill:

- Requires the governmental entity imposing an ordinance or other measure that deprives a person of a right or liberty to prove that the measure is “narrowly tailored” to address a “compelling public health or safety purpose”;
- Authorizes the Governor to invalidate an order that “unnecessarily restricts individual rights or liberties”; and
- Limits the duration of emergency orders to 7 days, with the option to renew the orders up to 5 times.

The bill also prohibits requirements of COVID-19-vaccination documentation to access, enter, or receive service from businesses, governmental entities, and educational institution. The bill

prohibits such entities from requiring Floridians to provide proof of vaccination or post-infection recovery from COVID-19 but does not restrict the use of screening protocols.

Finally, the bill includes several provisions to better address the financial strain that emergencies place on state and local government. Specifically the bill,

- Provides legislative intent that during an emergency, spending will first come from funds specifically appropriated to state and local agencies for disaster relief.
- Provides that the second recourse for funding is the newly created Emergency Response Fund.
- Provides that if additional funds are needed during an emergency beyond what is already appropriated in the new Emergency Response Trust Fund, the Governor can request additional funds by submitting a budget amendment through the LBC, requesting more funds in the Trust Fund.

These provisions take effect July 1, 2021, except where otherwise provided. (Chapter 2021-8, L.O.F.)

Vote: Senate 23-15; House 78-36