

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee

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BILL: SB 118  
 INTRODUCER: Senator Bullard  
 SUBJECT: Legislative Travel Reimbursement  
 DATE: March 4, 2010                      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Naf	Wilson	GO	<b>Favorable</b>
2.			RC	
3.			WPSC	
4.				
5.				
6.				

**I. Summary:**

This bill authorizes reimbursement of legislators and legislators’ staff members for certain travel expenses incurred in the course of visiting an immediate family member in the case of death or serious illness under specified circumstances. The bill also creates a definition for “immediate family member.”

This bill substantially amends s. 11.13, F.S.

**II. Present Situation:**

**Payment of Travel Expenses for Legislative Members**

Current law provides that each legislator is entitled to reimbursement for actual travel expenses for travel between the legislator’s home and the seat of government for one round trip per week or fraction of a week during any regular, special or extraordinary session of the Legislature or for the convening of either the House or Senate for official business.<sup>1</sup> Legislators are reimbursed from Senate funds for these travel expenses in amounts and under conditions specified in statute.<sup>2</sup> These travel expense reimbursements are paid separately from the subsistence<sup>3</sup> that legislators are also entitled to during session. That subsistence rate is established for legislators by their respective presiding officers and is currently \$133 per day for Senate members.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 11.13(2), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 112.061(7) and (8), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 11.13(2), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Phone call with the Office of Legislative Services Division of Administrative Services, March 9, 2010.

Legislative members of a committee are also entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses for committee meetings under specified circumstances.<sup>5</sup>

Legislators may also receive reimbursement for travel expenses not specifically authorized under the above circumstances from funds in their monthly allowances for intradistrict expenses.<sup>6</sup>

Each Senate member also receives a yearly additional district budget allotment for which the rate is set by the Senate President (currently \$9,400) out of which expenses may be paid for legislatively-related travel.<sup>7</sup>

### **Payment of Travel Expenses for Legislative Staff Members**

During a 60-day session, legislative staff members are authorized to receive reimbursement from Senate funds for travel expenses to and from the seat of government, as well as for two round trips to their homes during a 60-day session. Legislative staff members are reimbursed from Senate funds for these travel expenses in amounts and under conditions specified in statute.<sup>8</sup>

One legislative staff member per senator may be reimbursed for travel expenses out of Senate funds for committee meeting travel<sup>9</sup> conducted under statutorily-authorized circumstances.

Legislative staff members may also receive reimbursement for travel expenses not specifically authorized under the above circumstances from funds in their legislators' monthly allowances for intradistrict expenses.<sup>10</sup>

Expenses for legislative staff members for legislatively-related travel may also be paid out of the yearly additional district budget allotment.<sup>11</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

This bill provides that a legislator or a legislator's staff member will be reimbursed for travel expenses for travel from the seat of government to visit an immediate family member in the case of death or serious illness for one single round trip during any regular, special, or extraordinary session of the Legislature or for the convening of either the House or Senate for official business. The bill also provides that such reimbursement will be paid in accordance with s. 112.061(7) and (8), F.S., which specifies amounts and conditions for travel reimbursement. It appears that such reimbursement will be paid from Senate funds.

The bill defines "immediate family member" to mean a person having one of the following relationships to another: husband, wife, father, mother, son, or daughter.

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<sup>5</sup> Section 11.13(3), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 11.13(4), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Phone call with the Office of Legislative Services Division of Administrative Services, March 9, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Section 112.061(7) and (8), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 11.13(4), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 11.13(4), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Phone call with the Office of Legislative Services Division of Administrative Services, March 9, 2010.

The bill specifies an effective date of July 1, 2010.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

Indeterminate.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

The bill does not define the terms “serious illness” or “staff member,” which could potentially lead to ambiguity in interpretation and application of the provision.

**VIII. Additional Information:**

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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