This Florida Senate Handbook is published by the Secretary of the Senate. It is distributed free of charge to Capitol visitors and other interested Floridians to enhance their knowledge and understanding of Florida’s government, and particularly, the Florida Senate.

**R. Philip Twogood**  
Secretary of the Senate

Visit the Florida Senate’s homepage:  
[http://www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)
Welcome to your Florida Senate – a legislative institution rich in tradition, known for its commitment to deliberation and fairness. I invite every Florida citizen to visit the Senate chamber and walk the halls of the Capitol, which are lined with photographs recording the history that has shaped this great state.

Your Florida Senate is composed of forty individuals from every walk of life. They are individuals who understand the great responsibility they have to serve Florida’s citizens. Coming from varied backgrounds and experiences, they gather on the Senate floor with a deep sense of respect as equals. This dedicated group of diverse men and women is responsible for shaping public policy that impacts the future of all Floridians.

It is with great pride and honor that I will lead this diligent group of Senators as we work together to take on the pressing issues that face us this legislative session. We are committed to maintaining a balanced budget that prioritizes needs over wants without increasing taxes on Floridians. I am confident that alongside the many legislative decisions we will have to make throughout the session, those that lie within education, health care, and public safety will remain our priority.

I strongly encourage you to become involved in your state government. Your part in the legislative process is crucial to our success. Your input is critical in making the tough decisions we are currently facing. This year, we have placed an unprecedented emphasis on public opinion and transparency in the legislative process, and I welcome your solutions as we address these important state issues. We can work together to make sure that the State of Florida will prosper.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you,

Mike Haridopolos
The first Senate was convened on January 7, 1839 — six years before Florida became a state — no business could be transacted because only seven of the sixteen Senators were present. There was no quorum of Senators for three of the first four days, and it was not until the fifth day of the first session that Territorial Governor Richard Keith Call addressed the Senate and the House of Representatives in joint session.

Since the beginning days, the Senate has evolved into a highly organized, smoothly functioning legislative body that meets annually to conduct the people’s business. The year-round professional staff conducts vital research and prepares for the legislative sessions.

The Florida Senate today has 40 members, each elected from a single-member district and each representing approximately 450,000 Florida citizens. Each Senator is elected for a four-year staggered term. He or she may be elected for more than one term, but may not seek reelection if he or she has served for eight consecutive years (see Article VI, Section 4, State Constitution). The Constitution of the State of Florida specifies that Senators must be at least 21 years of age, must be registered voters, must be residents of the district from which they are elected, and must have resided in Florida for two years prior to their election.

While members of the other branches of government work full time in public service, the Legislature maintains its identity as the “citizen” branch. Many of the Senators work in a business or profession when they are not carrying out their legislative duties. Their occupations include law, medicine, banking, business, education, agriculture, and industry. “Once a Senator, always a Senator” is a catchy phrase of good fellowship that conveys something of the philosophy of the Senate.

The 2010-2012 Senate membership includes 27 men and 13 women. There are 28 Republicans and 12 Democrats. The average Senator is about 57 years old, is married, and has children. Thirty-three Senators have college degrees, and 14 held other non-legislative public offices before they were elected to the Senate. Thirty-one Senators served in the House of Representatives prior to their election to the Senate. The Senate is presided over by a President elected by the members of the Senate. Also elected is the President Pro Tempore. The President for the 2010-2012 term is Senator Mike Haridopolos from Melbourne. The President Pro Tempore is Senator Mike Bennett from Bradenton.

Additional information on these officers and the other members of the Senate is contained on the following pages of this handbook. The handbook also further outlines and describes the Senate, its operations, and its relationship to the House of Representatives and the other two branches of Florida government.
The Senate President is a constitutional officer who leads the Florida Senate for a two-year term. The President, who is elected by members of the Senate, manages the operations of the Senate and presides over its sessions. The President’s many duties include: selecting a Majority Leader, appointing Senators to standing Senate committees, appointing committee chairmen, and appointing citizens to a variety of boards and commissions.

The role of the President Pro Tempore is defined by the President and the Senate Rules. Additionally, the President Pro Tempore may preside over sessions during the absence of the President.


JD Alexander
Republican, District 17

Citrus Grower

BORN July 16, 1959, in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Moved to Florida in 1961

EDUCATION University of Florida: B.S., Agriculture, 1981

SPOUSE Cindy Monroe of Augusta, Georgia

CHILDREN Britton, Keaton


HISTORICAL Ben Hill Griffin, Jr., grandfather, Florida House of Representatives, 1956-1963, Senate 1965-1968

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Presbyterian

RECREATION Baseball, fishing, reading

EMAIL alexander.jd.web@flsenate.gov

Thad Altman
Republican, District 24

Contractor; Consultant

BORN September 8, 1955, in Macon, Georgia. Moved to Florida in 1957

EDUCATION Brevard Community College: A.A.; University of Houston; Rollins College: B.S.

SPOUSE Mary Pat Altman of Rockledge

CHILDREN Hunter, McKenzie, Sullivan


RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Christian

RECREATION Biking, family activities, hiking, hunting

EMAIL altman.thad.web@flsenate.gov

Lizbeth Benacquisto
Republican, District 27

Realtor; Marketing and Special Events Consultant


EDUCATION Palm Beach Atlantic University: B.A.

CHILDREN Austin, Gabriella, A.J.

LECTIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2010

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Catholic

RECREATION Spending time with family, reading, golfing, gardening

EMAIL benacquisto.lizbeth.web@flsenate.gov

Ellyn Setnor Bogdanoff
Republican, District 25

Attorney

BORN October 17, 1967, in North Miami


SPOUSE Steve Bogdanoff

CHILDREN Matthew, Alec, Danna


RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Jewish

RECREATION Tennis, yoga, golfing

EMAIL bogdanoff.ellyn.web@flsenate.gov
Oscar Braynon II
Democrat, District 33

Consultant BORN February 1, 1977, in Corpus Christi, Texas EDUCATION Florida State University, B.S., Political Science, 2000 SPOUSE Melissa of Miami CHILD Oscar Braynon III LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate, March 1, 2011; House of Representatives: 2008-2011 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Episcopal RECREATION basketball, soccer EMAIL braynon.oscar.web@flsenate.gov

Charles S. "Charlie" Dean, Sr.
Republican, District 3


Larcenia J. Bullard
Democrat, District 39


Nancy C. Detert
Republican, District 23

MIGUEL DIAZ DE LA PORTILLA
Republican, District 36
Attorney BORN January 30, in Miami EDUCATION University of Miami: B.A., Cum Laude, Philosophy and English Literature, 1984; J.D., 1987 SPOUSE Mari of Miami CHILDREN Michael Alexander, Jon-Christian, Mary Ester LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2010 HISTORICAL Grandfather, Angel Pio de la Portilla, deceased, mentor and inspiration for social and political involvement; paternal great-grandfather served in Cuban Senate, while two of his sons served simultaneously in the Cuban House of Representatives; maternal great-grandfather served as Cuban Minister of Justice (Attorney General); long family history of political and civic involvement in Cuba and the United States, including brothers Renier, former State Representative and current elected member of the Miami-Dade School Board, and Alex, former member of the Florida House of Representatives and former member of the Florida Senate - Senate Majority Leader 2008-2010 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Christian RECREATION Martial arts, mountain biking, hiking, reading EMAIL portilla.miguel.web@flsenate.gov

GREG EVERS
Republican, District 2
Farmer; Small Businessman BORN June 16, 1955, in Milton EDUCATION Pensacola Junior College SPOUSE Lori CHILDREN Stephanie, Jennifer, Rob GRANDCHILDREN Alli, Rex LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2010; House of Representatives: October 16, 2001-2010 HISTORICAL John Wilkinson, cousin, (Whig), Legislative Council House, Santa Rosa, 1844, and House, Santa Rosa, 1848-1850 and 1860; John Wilkinson, Jr., cousin, (Democrat), House, Santa Rosa, 1885, and Senate, District 1, 1889; A. J. Peaden, cousin, (Democrat), House, Santa Rosa, 1905, 1907, 1909; R. W. Peaden, cousin, (Democrat), House, District 2, 1972-1976; John W. Kennedy, great-uncle, Chair, Okaloosa County Commission; Durell Peaden, Jr., cousin, (Republican), Florida Senate, District 2, 2000-2010; Florida House of Representatives, District 1, 1994-2000 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Southern Baptist RECREATION Growing strawberries, farming, spending time with family and friends EMAIL evers.greg.web@flsenate.gov

PAULA DOCKER
Republican, District 15

MIKE FASANO
Republican, District 11
Anitere Flores
Republican, District 38
Majority (Republican) Whip

Attorney; Director of Community Partnerships (FIU) BORN September 8, 1976, in Miami EDUCATION Florida International University: B.A., 1997; University of Florida: J.D., 2001 SPOUSE Dustin Anderson of Sarasota CHILD Máximo Monte Anderson LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2010; Majority (Republican) Whip: 2010-2012; House of Representatives: 2004-2010; Deputy Majority Leader: 2008-2010 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Roman Catholic EMAIL flores.anitere.web@flsenate.gov

Rene Garcia
Republican, District 40

Vice President of Community Relations for Dade Medical College BORN July 10, 1974, in Hialeah EDUCATION Florida International University: B.S., Political Science, 1999; University of Miami: M.B.A., Health Administration and Policy, 2004 LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2010; House of Representatives: 2000-2008 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Catholic RECREATION Boating, traveling EMAIL garcia.rene.web@flsenate.gov

Don Gaetz
Republican, District 4

Co-founder and Vice Chairman (retired), VITAS Healthcare Corporation BORN January 22, 1948, in North Dakota. Moved to Florida in 1978 EDUCATION Concordia College: B.A.; Troy State University: M.P.A. SPOUSE Victoria Quertermous of Fort Walton Beach CHILDREN Matt, Erin LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2006; reelected subsequently HISTORICAL Father of State Representative Matt Gaetz RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Lutheran RECREATION Upland game and waterfowl hunting, American history, real estate, antiques EMAIL gaetz.don.web@flsenate.gov

Andy Gardiner
Republican, District 9
Majority (Republican) Leader

**Alan Hays**  
**Republican, District 20**

Dentist (Retired)  
**BORN** March 12, 1946, in Henderson, Kentucky. Moved to Florida in 1950  
**EDUCATION** Connors State College: A.S., Drafting and Design, 1967; University of Florida, College of Dentistry: DMD, 1976  
**SPOUSE** Jeanne Lease Hays of Winter Garden  
**CHILDREN** JoAnn, Leslie, Nancy  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate in 2011; House of Representatives: 2004-2010  
**MILITARY SERVICE** U.S. Coast Guard, 1967-1970, E-6 Dental Technician  
**RECREATION** Auto racing  
**EMAIL** hays.alan.web@flsenate.gov

Note: Senator Hays was elected in a special general election to replace Senator Anthony C. “Tony” Hill, Sr., who resigned from office. When references to Senator Hill are made in this publication, please refer to Senator Hays.

**Arthenia L. Joyner**  
**Democrat, District 18**

Paralegal; PR Liaison  
**BORN** March 15, in Jacksonville  
**EDUCATION** Florida State College of Jacksonville: A.A.; Florida State University: B.S., Criminology  
**CHILDREN** 3 adult children  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate, October 18, 2011; House of Representatives: 2002-2010  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** African Methodist Episcopal  
**RECREATION** Auto racing  
**EMAIL** gibson.audrey.web@flsenate.gov

Attorney; Public School Teacher, 1964-1965  
**BORN** February 3, 1943, in Lakeland  
**EDUCATION** Florida A&M University: B.S., Political Science, 1964; J.D., 1968  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** African Methodist Episcopal  
**RECREATION** Reading, traveling  
**EMAIL** joyner.arthenia.web@flsenate.gov

**Audrey Gibson**  
**Democrat, District 1**

Paralegal; PR Liaison  
**BORN** March 15, in Jacksonville  
**EDUCATION** Florida State College of Jacksonville: A.A.; Florida State University: B.S., Criminology  
**CHILDREN** 3 adult children  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate, October 18, 2011; House of Representatives: 2002-2010  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** Baptist  
**RECREATION** Golf, scuba diving, flying, family  
**EMAIL** hays.alan.web@flsenate.gov

Note: Senator Gibson was elected in a special general election to replace Senator Anthony C. “Tony” Hill, Sr., who resigned from office. When references to Senator Hill are made in this publication, please refer to Senator Gibson.

**Dennis L. Jones, D.C.**  
**Republican, District 13**

Vice President, Economic Development and Innovative Programs, St. Petersburg College  
**BORN** April 5, 1941, in Erie, Pennsylvania. Moved to Florida in 1950  
**EDUCATION** St. Petersburg Junior College; Lincoln Chiropractic College: D.C., 1963  
**SPOUSE** Susan Davis, Ph.D., of Brandon  
**CHILDREN** Rod, Jill (deceased)  
**GRANDCHILDREN** Jacob, Jaxon, Jarod  
**HISTORICAL** Aaron Arnold, great-great-grandfather, Circuit Judge of Kane County, Pennsylvania, 1840s  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** Methodist  
**RECREATION** Boating, fishing, traveling  
**EMAIL** jones.dennis.web@flsenate.gov

**Arthenia L. Joyner**  
**Democrat, District 1**

Paralegal; PR Liaison  
**BORN** March 15, in Henderson, Kentucky. Moved to Florida in 1950  
**EDUCATION** Connors State College: A.S., Drafting and Design, 1967; University of Florida, College of Dentistry: DMD, 1976  
**SPOUSE** Jeanne Lease Hays of Winter Garden  
**CHILDREN** JoAnn, Leslie, Nancy  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate, October 18, 2011; House of Representatives: 2002-2010  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** Baptist  
**RECREATION** Golf, scuba diving, flying, family  
**EMAIL** hays.alan.web@flsenate.gov

Attorney; Public School Teacher, 1964-1965  
**BORN** February 3, 1943, in Lakeland  
**EDUCATION** Florida A&M University: B.S., Political Science, 1964; J.D., 1968  
**RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** African Methodist Episcopal  
**RECREATION** Reading, traveling  
**EMAIL** joyner.arthenia.web@flsenate.gov
Jack Latvala
Republican, District 16
CEO, GCI Printing Services, Inc. d/b/a Gulf Coast Imprinting  
**BORN** November 3, 1951, in Oxford, Mississippi. Moved to Florida in 1961  
**EDUCATION** Stetson University: B.A., 1973  
**CHILDREN** Christopher, Stephanie  
**GRANDCHILDREN** Blake, Sydni  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate in 2010; Senate: 1994-2002  
**REBUS AFFILIATION** Baptist  
**RECREATION** Fishing, baseball  
**EMAIL** latvala.jack.web@flsenate.gov

Gwen Margolis
Democrat, District 35
Real Estate Broker; Investor  
**EDUCATION** Temple University  
**CHILDREN** Edward, Ira, Karen, Robin  
**GRANDCHILDREN** Sarah, Jeffrey, Ariel, Jordan, Leah, Daniel, Jared  
**REBUS AFFILIATION** Jewish  
**RECREATION** Music, theatre  
**EMAIL** margolis.gwen.web@flsenate.gov

Evelyn J. Lynn
Republican, District 7  
Legislator; Consultant  
**BORN** February 2, in Astoria, New York. Moved to Florida in 1960  
**CHILDREN** Karen, Robert  
**GRANDCHILDREN** Sara  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate in 2002, reelected subsequently; Republican Conference Chair: 2010-2012; House of Representatives: 1994-2002  
**REBUS AFFILIATION** Methodist  
**RECREATION** Traveling, watercolor, reading  
**EMAIL** lynn.evelyn.web@flsenate.gov

Bill Montford
Democrat, District 6  
CEO, Florida Association of District School Superintendents  
**BORN** August 22, 1947, in Marianna  
**EDUCATION** Chipola Junior College: A.A., 1967; Florida State University: B.S., 1969; M.S., 1971  
**SPouse** Jane Gard Montford of Tallahassee  
**CHILDREN** Bill, Katherine  
**GRANDCHILDREN** Jake, Henry, Wyatt, Ellie Jane  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate in 2010; Minority (Democratic) Whip: 2010-2012  
**REBUS AFFILIATION** Baptist  
**RECREATION** Family activities, sports, reading  
**EMAIL** montford.bill.web@flsenate.gov
**JOE NEGRON**  
**Republican, District 28**

Attorney BORN October 9, 1961, in West Palm Beach EDUCATION Stetson University: B.A.; Harvard University: M.P.A.; Emory University: J.D. SPOUSE Rebecca Horton Negron of Hobe Sound CHILDREN David, Jonathan, Becca LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate August 4, 2009, reelected subsequently; House of Representatives: 2000-2006 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Protestant RECREATION Basketball, softball, golf, courthouse architecture EMAIL negron.joe.web@flsenate.gov

**STEVE OELRICH**  
**Republican, District 14**

Sheriff (retired) BORN September 29, 1945, in Pensacola EDUCATION St. Petersburg Junior College: A.A., 1968; Florida State University: B.S., 1970 SPOUSE Rose Mary Treadway of Pensacola CHILDREN Ivan, Kenneth, Nick (deceased) LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2006; reelected subsequently RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Catholic RECREATION Hunting, fishing, birding EMAIL oelrich.steve.web@flsenate.gov

**JIM NORMAN**  
**Republican, District 12**

BORN September 3, 1953, in Jacksonville SPOUSE Mearline LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2010 EMAIL norman.jim.web@flsenate.gov

**NAN H. RICH**  
**Democrat, District 34**

**GARRETT RICHTER**  
Republican, District 37


**EMAIL** richter.garrett.web@flsenate.gov

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**MARIA LORTS SACHS**  
Democrat, District 30

Attorney, Constitutional Law **BORN** March 25, in Battle Creek, Michigan. Moved to Florida in 1976 **EDUCATION** University of Maryland: B.A., Cum Laude; Boston University: M.A.; University of Miami: J.D. **SPOUSE** Peter Sachs, of Berlin, Germany **CHILDREN** Natasha, Marcello, Taylor **LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate in 2010; House of Representatives: 2006-2010  

**HISTORICAL** Russell F. Lorts, father, decorated combat Veteran, U.S. Army Infantry, World War II; mother, Italian war bride, World War II **RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** Catholic **RECREATION** Autocross, equestrian, biking  

**EMAIL** sachs.maria.web@flsenate.gov

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**JEREMY RING**  
Democrat, District 32

Entrepreneur **BORN** August 10, 1970, in New Haven, Connecticut. Moved to Florida in 2001 **EDUCATION** Attended Syracuse University: 1992 **SPOUSE** Sharon **CHILDREN** Elijah, Levi, Eliana, Galit **LEGISLATIVE SERVICE** Elected to the Senate in 2006, reelected subsequently **RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION** Jewish **RECREATION** Spending time with family, boating, tennis, 19th Century American History  

**EMAIL** ring.jeremy.web@flsenate.gov

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**DAVID SIMMONS**  
Republican, District 22  
Majority (Republican) Whip


**EMAIL** simmons.david.web@flsenate.gov
GARY SIPLIN  
Democrat, District 19


ELEANOR SOBEL  
Democrat, District 31


CHRISTOPHER L. “CHRIS” SMITH  
Democrat, District 29


RONDA STORMS  
Republican, District 10

Teacher; Attorney; Businesswoman BORN Des Moines, Iowa. Moved to Florida in 1982 EDUCATION University of South Florida: B.A., Education, 1988; Stetson University: J.D., 1995 SPOUSE David Storms of Valrico CHILDREN Daughter and son LEGISLATIVE SERVICE Elected to the Senate in 2006, reelected subsequently RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Baptist RECREATION Collecting local art, gardening, reading EMAIL storms.ronda.web@flsenate.gov
John Thrasher
Republican, District 8


Stephen R. Wise
Republican, District 5


Senate Organization

Senate Committees

Standing Committees
- Agriculture
- Banking and Insurance
- Budget
- Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations
- Subcommittee on Education Pre-K - 12 Appropriations
- Subcommittee on Finance and Tax
- Subcommittee on General Government Appropriations
- Subcommittee on Health and Human Services Appropriations
- Subcommittee on Higher Education Appropriations
- Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development Appropriations
- Children, Families, and Elder Affairs

- Commerce and Tourism
- Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities
- Community Affairs
- Criminal Justice
- Education Pre-K - 12
- Environmental Preservation and Conservation
- Governmental Oversight and Accountability
- Health Regulation
- Higher Education
- Judiciary
- Military Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security
- Reapportionment
- Regulated Industries
- Rules
  - Subcommittee on Ethics and Elections
- Transportation
At its organization session every two years, the Senate elects a Secretary of the Senate pursuant to the Constitution of the State of Florida. This non-member constitutional officer publishes the Journal and the calendar, keeps all Senate records, and authenticates each act and resolution passed by the Senate.

Other operations within the Secretary’s Office include: bill drafting, bill and amendment filing, duplication and distribution of documents, recording of actions taken by the Senate, and the performance of support services for the Senate. Special chamber computer programs, such as the vote system and Session Organizer, are designed and operated by the Secretary’s Office.

The Secretary speaks to various visiting civic and student groups during the year. The Secretary’s Office hosts numerous mock sessions throughout each year. Staff and facilities are provided for the YMCA Youth Legislature, Boys State, Girls State, Florida 4-H, and others.

BORN November 15, 1955, in Denver, Colorado. Moved to Florida in 1967 EDUCATION Tallahassee Community College: AA, 2009; AS, Business Administration and Management, 1991 SPOUSE Larry CHILDREN Monica, Michael GRANDCHILDREN Brayden Lane, Madelynn Grace; Sophie Reese, Hudson Thomas RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION Methodist RECREATION Reading

The President appoints a Sergeant at Arms who attends the Senate during its sessions; maintains order under the direction of the President; executes the commands of and serves Senate process as directed by the President of the Senate and by the Senate; has charge of all property of the Senate to the extent as is delegated to the Sergeant at Arms by the President; has general charge of the security of the chamber, committee rooms, and gallery of the Senate and maintains order therein in cooperation with the Division of Capitol Police; and has general supervision of the doorkeepers and professional maintenance staff.


Elected Secretary of the Senate January 2012-present; Director: Senate Administration, Office of the President: 2010-present; Office of the Senate President 2002-2010; Office of the Senate Secretary 1993-2002; 1997-1998 Florida Constitution Revision Commission liaison
The Senate Chamber, also known as the “floor,” is the room on the fourth floor of the Capitol where Senators debate the merits of proposed legislation. The current chamber is the fourth used since the first session of the Senate was called to order in 1839. The first session held in this chamber occurred in 1978.

On the floor above the chamber is the gallery. Citizens may sit in the gallery to observe the Senate in session. From the gallery, attention is drawn to the rostrum where the President is presiding. Above the rostrum is the Senate seal, which was adopted in 1972.

The President occupies the “chair,” pacing the flow of legislation, deciding who will speak, and ruling on parliamentary disputes. The President may call on other Senators to preside while he or she works out the details of legislative proposals.

The portraits hanging below the gallery commemorate past Presidents of the Senate. After each President’s term, a portrait is painted and hung in this area. The portraits are arranged in chronological order with the most recent one on the presiding officer’s right. Each time the newest one is added, the oldest one is taken down and moved to the Historic Capitol, keeping 100 years of past Presidents on display in the “new” chamber.

In front of the President’s rostrum is the Secretary’s desk, which is staffed by the Secretary of the Senate. Legislative business is not properly before the Senate until it is “on the desk.” Clerks at this desk read the bills and amendments and record Senate actions. These actions are published in the Journal, the official record of Senate proceedings. A Senator who wishes to “approach the well” to make a speech speaks from one of the reading podiums at the Secretary’s desk. Session Organizer, designed to display amendments and information on bills, allows Senators the flexibility of accessing legislative information from their Tallahassee offices and in the Senate Chamber on their laptop computers.

Voting boards on each side of the chamber record a member’s green “yea” or red “nay” vote. The amber lights you see next to some names indicate that the Senator wants a “page” to deliver a message or retrieve a file from his or her office. The voting boards also display the number of the bill or amendment being debated and other information related to the proceedings. Electronic voting was first used in the Senate in 1966, and now nearly all votes are recorded electronically.

The seating arrangement in the chamber is determined by the President. Telephones at each chamber desk provide direct communication with the Senator’s professional district staff. Only members of the Senate and designated professional staff are allowed in the chamber while the Senate is in session. Certain present and past state officials and guests invited by the President may also enter the chamber during a session.

Senators are addressed by their district number when they are recognized to speak. Custom decrees that a Senator may not be addressed as a “gentleman” or “lady.” He or she is “the Senator from the fifth,” for example, but never “the gentleman or lady from the fifth.” During debate, the members are always formally addressed as “Senator,” not by their given names.

Just above the main entrance is the press gallery, where members of Florida’s press corps report Senate actions. The remainder of the gallery is open to the public at all sessions, except that a portion of the gallery is usually reserved for the Senators’ families and other sections are often temporarily reserved for visiting students.

Robotic cameras from the Florida Channel are positioned in the chamber to provide live, televised coverage of all Senate sessions. Each weekday evening during the session, The Florida Channel and Florida’s public television affiliates broadcast “Capitol Update,” a live half-hour news program explaining and analyzing each day’s most significant legislative developments. The broadcasts are funded by the Legislature, but all editorial content is determined by the group of professional journalists who produce the programs. Florida’s legislative telecasts were used as a model for a similar system installed in 1979 in the U.S. House of Representatives. In addition, live and unedited feeds of some legislative events can be found at www.flsenate.gov and www.wfsu.org.
Your Senator is interested in hearing your opinions concerning the issues on which he or she will vote. This section will provide you with guidelines on how to approach legislators and how best to express your ideas so that they will be read, or listened to, and understood.

Most people communicate with their Senator by letter (increasingly by email), but you can also try to speak directly with him or her by telephone or even in person. No matter which method you choose, the same guidelines apply:

- Know your subject matter well, and have data to back up your point of view.
- Inform yourself about the full name and address of your Senator and about the positions he or she has taken on the issues that concern you.
- Do not use form letters; instead, if you are working from a form letter, rewrite the essential points in your own words.
- If you represent others from your community, formally or even informally, indicate that to the Senator.
- Be brief and to-the-point in your presentation. Attach supporting data or documents and refer to them in your cover letter.
- Be courteous.
- Be completely fair in your presentation of the facts.
- If you are interested in a specific bill, refer to that bill by its number. You can find out this information by accessing the Senate’s homepage at www.flsenate.gov or by calling the Division of Legislative Information Services at 1-800-342-1827. Note that Senate Bills are even numbered and House Bills are odd numbered.
- Always provide your address (street and/or email) and your telephone number so that your Senator or his or her staff assistants can contact you for further data or discussion.
- If you are going to meet personally with your Senator, prepare carefully for the meeting and be on time. If he or she asks you for more information than you have brought with you, be prompt in responding to the request.

You may want to keep track of your bills as they proceed through the legislative process. To find out which committees your bills have been assigned to, access the Florida Senate’s homepage (www.flsenate.gov), contact your Senator’s office, or call the Division of Legislative Information Services (1-800-342-1827).

You may have an opportunity to appear before a committee that is hearing the bill by contacting the committee as soon as the bill has been referred to the committee. The committee’s chair controls his or her committee’s agenda and schedules the bills.

If your bill is scheduled for a public hearing, keep these guidelines in mind:

- When signing up to testify on a bill, the committee may require you to present written testimony for distribution to committee members and professional staff. Written testimony should be submitted to the appropriate office at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled committee hearing. At the meeting, fill out an appearance record form.
- Generally, each committee chair follows the order of the bills listed on the agenda.
- Prepare your oral testimony in advance and be brief unless asked to elaborate.

- Be specific and to-the-point regarding the bill you are testifying on.
- Be prepared to answer questions from committee members on your testimony or on the position you have taken on each bill. If you do not know the answer to a question, just say so.
### Presidents of the Senate

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<td>Dennitt H. Mays</td>
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<td>Thomas Jefferson Eppes</td>
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<td>Enoch J. Vann</td>
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<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Abraham K. Allison</td>
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*From 1865 through 1887, the Lt. Governor served as President.*

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<tr>
<td>1865-1868</td>
<td>William W. J. Kelly</td>
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<td>1868-1870</td>
<td>William H. Gleason</td>
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<td>Edmund C. Weeks</td>
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<td>1871-1873</td>
<td>Samuel T. Day</td>
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<td>1873-1874</td>
<td>Marcellus L. Stearns</td>
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<tr>
<td>1874-1877</td>
<td>A.L. McCaskill*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(President Pro Tempore)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1877-1879</td>
<td>Noble A. Hull</td>
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<tr>
<td>1881-1885</td>
<td>L.W. Bethel</td>
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*Presided over the Senate in the absence of Lt. Governor Stearns who became Governor on March 18, 1874, upon the death of Governor O.B. Hart*

<table>
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<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>1885-1887</td>
<td>Milton Mabry</td>
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<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Patrick Houstoun</td>
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<td>1889</td>
<td>Joseph B. Wall</td>
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<td>Jefferson B. Browne</td>
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<td>Charles J. Perrenot</td>
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<td>1903</td>
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<td>W. Hunt Harris</td>
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<td>1909</td>
<td>Frederick M. Hudson</td>
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<td>1911-1912</td>
<td>Frederick P. Cone</td>
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<td>Herbert J. Drane</td>
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<td>Charles E. Davis</td>
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<td>1917-1918</td>
<td>John B. Johnson</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>James E. Calkins</td>
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<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>William A. MacWilliams</td>
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<td>1923</td>
<td>Theo. T. Turnbull</td>
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<td>1925</td>
<td>John S. Taylor</td>
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**Extraordinary Session**
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<td>1927</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Jesse J. Parrish</td>
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<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>Patrick C. Whitaker</td>
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<td>1933</td>
<td>Truman G. Futch</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>William C. Hodges</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>D. Stuart Gillis</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>J. Turner Butler</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>John R. Beacham</td>
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<td>1943</td>
<td>Philip D. Beall</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>Walter W. Rose</td>
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<td>Scott Dilworth Clarke</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>Newman C. Brackin</td>
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<td>1951</td>
<td>Wallace E. Sturgis</td>
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<td>1953</td>
<td>Charley E. Johns</td>
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<td>1955-56</td>
<td>W. Turner Davis</td>
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<td>1957</td>
<td>William A. Shands</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>Dewey M. Johnson</td>
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<td>1961-62</td>
<td>W. Randolph Hodges</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>F. Wilson Carraway</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>James E. Connor</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Verle A. Pope</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968-70</td>
<td>John E. Mathews, Jr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-72</td>
<td>Jerry Thomas</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Be a part of history! The Senate Page Program gives Florida students the rare opportunity to observe and participate in the legislative process.

During regular sessions of the Legislature, participating students come to Tallahassee for one week to work in the Senate Chamber, distribute materials, and deliver messages to Senators and professional staff. Each Senator may sponsor up to two pages (ages 15-18). Senators may also submit applications for alternate pages, who serve on an as-needed basis.

Sponsoring Senators give an application to the students they wish to sponsor. Senators submit completed applications by January of each year. The Office of the Senate President schedules each page for one week of service during the upcoming session. Professional dress is required.

Pages receive a minimum-wage stipend for participating in the program. Students are expected to provide their own transportation, housing, and meals while in Tallahassee.

During each week of session, pages discuss the legislative process and participate in a “mock session.” Students act as Senators, debating and voting on bills. Other educational opportunities and Capitol tours are planned during session.

This is just a sample of the numerous official designations for our state. Other designations range from the state motto and state anthem, to the state pie and state horse. A longer list may be found in the Capitol Rotunda between the legislative chambers. A complete listing of the state designations can be found in Chapter 15, Florida Statutes.
Legislator, citizen, or group suggests legislation

Senator decides to introduce bill

Bill Drafting Service either writes bill or reviews for style

Bill Filed with Secretary, numbered, printed

First Reading by publication in Journal; President refers to committee(s)

Committee Hearing(s) bill reported:
1. favorably
2. favorably, with amendment(s)
3. favorably, with committee substitute
4. unfavorably

Second Reading bill read, may be amended

Committee Hearing(s) bill read, debated, may be amended, roll call vote on passage

Third Reading bill read, debated, may be amended, roll call vote on passage

Senate and House adopt conference report in its entirety, pass bill

Senate and House Enrolling (as act)

Senate concurs

Senate refuses to concur

Conference Committee Senate House members members (majority of each must agree to report)

To Senate Engrossing

Bill Read First Time Speaker assigns to committee(s)

Bill Read Second Time Speaker assigns to committee(s)

Bill Read Third Time Speaker assigns to chamber(s)

To Governor

Signs act

Without signature

Vetoes

To Secretary of State

Two-thirds vote in each house overrides veto

Becomes Effective on 60th day after adjournment sine die or on specified date or upon Governor’s signature

Return to Senate without amendment(s)

With amendment(s)

Senators

Citizen

Prepared by the Office of the Secretary of the Senate

A simplified chart showing the route many bills take through the Florida Legislature. Bills may originate in either house. This bill originated in the Senate.
Florida’s Constitution, in the traditional American pattern of “separation of powers,” divides state government into three separate and independent branches. This division of powers creates a system of “checks and balances” ensuring that all three branches properly perform their constitutional duties in the administration of state affairs. Tallahassee is the seat of Florida’s state government.

The Florida Constitution vests the supreme executive power of the state in the Governor and provides that he or she shall ensure that the laws are faithfully executed. It provides for a Lieutenant Governor to be elected in a joint candidacy with the Governor. The Lieutenant Governor works with the Governor and performs such duties pertaining to the office of the Governor as assigned by the Governor, or as otherwise provided by law. The Constitution also provides that the Governor shall be assisted by an elected Cabinet consisting of an Attorney General, Chief Financial Officer, and a Commissioner of Agriculture.

The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and members of the Cabinet are elected to four-year terms. They take office on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January following their election in November of non-presidential election years. The Governor may succeed himself or herself in office unless he or she has served more than six years in two consecutive terms. Cabinet members may not seek reelection if, by the end of their current term, they will have served in that office for eight consecutive years.
**THE JUDICIAL BRANCH**

He Judicial Branch interprets the law and applies the Constitution. Florida’s court system consists of a series of circuit and county courts, district courts of appeal, and the state Supreme Court.

County courts preside over criminal trials of misdemeanors and some civil cases. They also have the power to issue warrants of arrest. There is one county court located in each of Florida’s 67 counties. The number of judges in each county court varies with the population and caseload of the county. County judges are elected to four-year terms.

Circuit courts are located in each of Florida’s 20 judicial circuits. Some circuits contain only one county, but most are multi-county. The circuit courts are at the top of the trial system, and they also hear limited appeals from county courts. Circuit judges are elected by the voters of the circuits to serve six-year terms.

The District Courts of Appeal are intermediate appellate courts that receive most of the appeals from trial courts. There are five judicial districts in Florida, with courts located in Tallahassee, Lakeland, Daytona Beach, West Palm Beach, and Miami. Appointed by the Governor to serve in each district court, these judges must be reconfirmed by the voters every six years.

The Supreme Court is at the top of Florida’s court system and is the final state court of appeal. The Supreme Court determines the constitutionality of statutes, has the authority to issue advisory opinions to the Governor, and has administrative responsibilities over all lower courts. There are seven Supreme Court justices, each appointed by the Governor and retained by a popular vote every six years. Current justices include: Justice Barbara J. Pariente, Chief Justice Charles T. Canady, Justice R. Fred Lewis, Justice Jorge Labarga, Justice Peggy A. Quince, Justice Ricky Polston, and Justice James E.C. Perry.

**THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH**

The Legislative Branch has exclusive lawmaking power and determines the general policies by which the problems of society are to be met. It may delegate limited rulemaking power to some executive agencies.

**Composition and Organization.** The Constitution of the State of Florida requires that members of the Legislature be elected at the general election in November of even-numbered years. Florida’s Legislature is composed of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. Each house is the sole judge of the qualifications and elections of its members and has the power to choose its own officers and establish its own rules of procedure. All legislative sessions are open to the public, except when appointments or suspensions of public officials are considered in executive session. Either house of the Legislature may initiate legislation on any subject.

The State Constitution provides that the Legislature shall be apportioned into 30 to 40 senatorial districts, and 80 to 120 representative districts. The 1972 Legislature established 40 Senate districts and 120 House districts. Senators serve four-year terms and representatives serve two-year terms. While a legislator may be elected for more than one term, he or she may not seek reelection if at the end of his or her current term he or she has served for eight consecutive years.

**Reapportionment and Redistricting.** During the 2002 Regular Session, the Florida Legislature realigned districts to account for Florida’s two new seats in the United States Congress and for uneven population growth during the past decade among Florida Senate and House of Representatives districts. Reapportionment and redistricting will occur again during the 2012 legislative session.
Legislative Sessions. Two weeks after each general election, the Legislature convenes for the exclusive purpose of organization and election of officers. No legislation is considered during the organization session.

Regular sessions of the Legislature begin on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March in odd-numbered years and continue for 60 consecutive days, which may be extended by a three-fifths vote of each house. The Legislature may change its convening date in even-numbered years, except once every 10 years when the Constitution requires the Legislature to reapportion the state’s voting districts. Special sessions may be called by the Governor, or may be convened by joint proclamation of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Special sessions may not exceed 20 days, unless extended by a three-fifths vote of each house. Each “call” for a special session outlines the business to be considered. The Senate may resolve itself into executive session to consider appointment to or removal from public office, even when the House of Representatives is not meeting.

Rules. During the organization session, each house adopts its rules of procedure to be followed for the next two years. The rules provide for orderly proceedings and determine how each house will conduct its business.

Committees. A committee functions to study, research, and plan solutions to issues facing Floridians. The Senate and House rules provide for standing committees, special or select committees, and subcommittees. The presiding officers name the chairs and members of all committees.

Bills are assigned to one or more committees for study. Committees may hold public hearings where committee members hear sponsoring legislators and others who are interested in the bill. The committee may vote to recommend the bill favorably; favorably with a committee substitute; unfavorably; or favorably with amendments to be considered when the bill is debated on the floor by the respective house.

When the Senate and House are unable to agree on the final content of a bill, it goes to a conference committee. This committee, composed of members of both houses, tries to resolve the differences between the Senate and House versions of a bill.

Forms of Legislation. Legislative proposals may be in the form of bills, resolutions, concurrent resolutions, joint resolutions, or memorials. A bill is a proposed law, and it may be either a general bill or a local bill. A general bill would have a general impact within the state; a local bill would affect only a particular county, city, or town named in the bill. A majority vote is required to pass a bill, unless otherwise provided in the Constitution. Companion bills are often used as a timesaving device. These are identical bills introduced in both houses, which allow simultaneous committee study in each body. The appropriations bill is one of the most important bills considered by the Legislature. This bill is the state’s budget and it specifies the amount of money available to various state agencies during the next year. The appropriations bill follows the same course as other general bills, but because it is difficult to get both houses to agree on all items in the bill, a conference committee is usually appointed to resolve the differences.

Lobbying. A lobbyist is someone who tries to influence decisions made by government. Unless exempted by law or rule, any person who seeks to affect legislation must register with the Division of Legislative Information Services before he or she can begin lobbying. Each lobbyist must also state any direct business association or partnership with any current member of the Legislature. Lobbyist firms must make periodic reports on compensation.

Journals and Calendars. The Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House each publish daily journals and calendars during the legislative session. Each journal details the proceedings on the floor, committee reports, and related actions of the previous day. Calendars serve as official notification of legislative activities, such as sessions, committee meetings, bills to be considered, schedules, deadlines, and other significant information.
Senate Districts 2010-2012

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<th>District</th>
<th>Senator</th>
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<td>Bennett (R)</td>
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<td>Evers (R)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Hays (R)</td>
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<td>Garcia (R)</td>
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Glossary of Legislative Terms

Act – A bill passed by the legislature.
Adjourn – To end a legislative session or a committee meeting.
Adopt – To vote to accept.
Amendment – A proposal to change the original terms of a bill.
Bicameral – Consisting of two houses. All states have bicameral legislatures except Nebraska, which has only one house (unicameral).
Bill – A draft of a proposed law.
Budget – A bill that states how much money will be spent on government programs and services.
Calendar – A publication containing legislative activities or a list of bills awaiting action.
Chair – A legislator who presides over a committee meeting or a session.
Chamber – Also known as the “floor,” it is the room in which the Senate or the House of Representatives meets.
Clerk of the House of Representatives – The person appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives to assist the members of the House in the detailed processes of enacting laws and to record that history.
Committee – A group of Senators or Representatives appointed by the presiding officer to consider important issues and to report its recommendations for action by the body that originated it.
Convene – To meet in formal legislative session.
Debate – To argue the merits of a bill, for and against.
Decorum – Appropriate behavior and conduct.
District – That area of the state represented by a legislator, determined on the basis of population.
Gallery – The seating area for visitors located above each chamber (on the fifth floor of the Capitol).
Governor – The chief executive of the State.
Journal – The official record of the proceedings of the Senate or the House of Representatives.
Law – The final product of the legislative process. It is the end result of the introduction of a bill, its passage by both houses, its approval by the Governor (or the overriding of his veto by the legislature), and its recording by the Secretary of State.
Majority party – The political party having more than half of the seats in a house.
Minority party – The political party having fewer than a majority of seats in a house.
Motion – A proposal, usually oral, made to the presiding officer and relating to procedure or action before a legislative body.
Oath of Office – An oath or vow taken by a public official prior to taking up his or her official duties.
Order of Business – The defined routine of procedure in the legislative body each day. It can be deviated from only by waiver of the rules.
Passage – Favorable action on a measure before the legislature.
President of the Senate – The presiding officer of the Senate. He or she is designated as President by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the full membership of the Senate for a term of two years.
President Pro Tempore of the Senate – Literally, president “for a time.” Elected by the Senate, he or she performs specified duties as prescribed by the Senate Rules or the Senate President.
Quorum – The number of members required for the conduct of business.
Repeal – The removal of a provision from the law.
Roll call – To determine a vote on a question by the taking of names in favor of and opposed to.
Rules – Provisions for the procedure, organization, officers, and committees of each house of the legislature.
Secretary of the Senate – The person elected by the Senate to assist Senate officers, members, and professional staff in the detailed processes of enacting laws and to record that history.
Sergeant at Arms – The person in each house who is responsible for the security of the legislative house and the maintenance of that house’s property.
Session – The period during which the legislature meets.
Sine die – Refers to final adjournment of a legislative session. The term is sometimes used to denote the ceremony involving the dropping of white handkerchiefs, which symbolizes the end of a regular session.
Speaker of the House of Representatives – The presiding officer of the House of Representatives. He or she is designated as Speaker by the majority party in caucus and then elected by the full membership of the House for a term of two years.
Veto – Return by the Governor to the legislature of a bill without his or her signature; the veto message from the Governor usually explains why he or she thinks the bill should not become a law.
Vote – A decision on a question, either affirmative or negative.
Washington, D.C. is the seat of the nation’s government. The names and addresses of Florida’s representatives in the legislative branch may be found on a separate page in many Florida telephone directories.

Further information on each member of Congress may be found at the official websites for The United States Senate (www.senate.gov) and The United States House of Representatives (www.house.gov).

The Senate is composed of 100 members, two from each state, elected by the people pursuant to the 17th Amendment to the United States Constitution. A Senator must be at least 30 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for nine years, and, when elected, be a resident of the state from which the Senator is chosen. The term of office is six years, and one-third of the total membership of the Senate is elected every second year. The terms of both Senators from a particular state are so arranged that they do not terminate at the same time. Of the two Senators from a state serving at the same time, the one who was elected first (or if both were elected at the same time, the one elected for a full term) is referred to as the “senior” Senator from that state. The other is referred to as the “junior” Senator. Senators Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio represent Florida in Washington.

The House of Representatives is composed of 435 members elected every two years from among the 50 states, apportioned according to their total populations. Today there is one representative for approximately every 646,952 residents, a much larger figure than the 30,000 residents the Constitution of the United States originally required for a Congressional district.

A Representative must be at least 25 years of age, have been a citizen of the United States for seven years, and, when elected, be a resident of the state in which the Representative is chosen.

In addition to the Representatives from each of the states, there is a Resident Commissioner from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and Delegates from the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. The Resident Commissioner and the Delegates have most of the prerogatives of Representatives, with the important exception of the right to vote on matters before the House.

Under the provisions of Section 2 of the 20th Amendment to the United States Constitution, Congress must assemble at least once every year, at noon on the third day of January, unless by law it appoints a different day. A Congress lasts for two years, commencing in January of the year following the biennial election of members, and is divided into two sessions.

Unlike some other parliamentary bodies, both the Senate and the House of Representatives have equal legislative functions and powers (except that only the House of Representatives may initiate revenue bills), and the designation of one as the “upper” House and the other as the “lower” House is not appropriate.
The United States Constitution authorizes each House to determine the rules of its proceedings. Pursuant to that authority, the House of Representatives adopts its rules on the opening day of each Congress. The Senate, which considers itself a continuing body, operates under standing rules that it amends from time to time.

The chief function of Congress is the making of laws. In addition, the Senate has the function of advising and consenting to treaties and to certain nominations by the President. In the matter of impeachments, the House of Representatives presents the charges – a function similar to that of a grand jury – and the Senate sits as a court to try the impeachment. Following a presidential election, both houses meet in joint session on the sixth day of January, unless by law they appoint a different day, to count the electoral votes.
Florida has had six Constitutions since it became a state. The first Constitution was drafted in Saint Joseph, now known as Fort St. Joe. Presently, Florida is governed by the Constitution of 1968, as subsequently amended.

Florida’s first Legislative Council, which was supposed to meet in Pensacola on June 10, 1822, did not meet until 44 days later due to hazardous and time-consuming travel.

Tallahassee was named the state capital in 1824 by Florida’s first territorial governor, William P. DuVal.

The total land area of Florida is 54,252 square miles. The total water area is 4,308 square miles.

In 1824, three log cabins were erected in Tallahassee to accommodate the Legislative Council. This was Florida’s first Capitol.

In the 1890s, several efforts were made to move the state capital from Tallahassee. Choices included Jacksonville, Ocala, and St. Augustine.

Florida’s fourth and present Capitol was officially opened on March 31, 1978, by Governor Reubin Askew.

Construction of Florida’s present Capitol required 3,700 tons of structural steel and 2,800 tons of reinforcing steel. The Capitol contains 25,000 cubic feet of concrete, the equivalent of 16 football fields, each one foot thick.

Florida has been home to such famed writers as Ernest Hemingway, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, and Tennessee Williams.

In 1990, Senator Gwen Margolis of Miami became the first woman in Florida’s history to be elected to serve as President of the Senate.

Toni Jennings was the first Senator in Florida to be elected President of the Senate for two consecutive terms, presiding from 1996-2000. In 2003, she was chosen by Governor Jeb Bush to become Florida’s first female Lieutenant Governor following the resignation of Frank Brogan.

The first reusable spacecraft, the space shuttle Columbia, was launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on its maiden voyage on April 12, 1981.

The word “Tallahassee” is of Creek derivation and is frequently translated as “old town” or “old fields.” The name may have been taken from the Seminole Indians who occupied the area.

Juan Ponce de Leon came ashore on the northeast coast of Florida sometime between April 2 and April 8, 1513. He called the area la Florida, in honor of Pascua Florida (feast of the flowers), a popular celebration held in Spain around Easter.

A prior Constitution in 1868 provided that the Seminole Tribe was entitled to a member in the Florida Senate and House.

Saint Augustine is the oldest continuously inhabited European settlement in North America.
The unified government of Florida was established March 30, 1822, when President Monroe signed into law the act which provided for a Governor and a Legislative Council of 13 citizens. Florida was the 27th state to be admitted to the United States (March 3, 1845).

DeFuniak Springs is home to one of the two naturally round lakes in the world.

Ft. Lauderdale is known as the Venice of America because it has 185 miles of local waterways.

In anticipation of statehood, 56 commissioners elected from Florida’s 20 counties gathered at Saint Joseph (Port St. Joe) to draft a constitution. The convention lasted from December 3, 1838, until January 11, 1839.

Florida’s highest natural point is 345 feet, located near Lakewood in Walton County.

“Stormsong,” the 50-foot long pod of leaping dolphins in front of the Capitol, is made of stainless steel and recycled aluminum and weighs 8,000 pounds (four tons).

The Florida quarter was released by the U.S. Mint as part of its 50 State Quarters Program in 2004.
Hey Kids, visit us on the web!
We have games, puzzles, fun facts, and more about our state.
www.flsenate.gov

This Internet site introduces younger Floridians to the Florida Senate. Designed to be educational, it appeals to children of all ages. This site is easily accessed (interface is not browser specific) and low-resolution graphics allow for ease of use. Senate Kids is always under construction. Keep checking for new features.

In memory of Jhonnie Gillispie, Assistant Secretary of the Senate, who devoted more than 30 years of tireless dedication and hard work in service of the Florida Senate.
This Florida Senate Handbook is published by the Secretary of the Senate. It is distributed free of charge to Capitol visitors and other interested Floridians to enhance their knowledge and understanding of Florida’s government, and particularly, the Florida Senate.

R. Philip Twogood
Secretary of the Senate

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http://www.fl senate.gov