



# Journal of the Senate

Number 2—Regular Session

Wednesday, January 14, 2026

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## CALL TO ORDER

The Senate was called to order by President Albritton at 4:00 p.m. A quorum present—39:

Mr. President	DiCeglie	Osgood
Arrington	Gaetz	Passidomo
Avila	Garcia	Pizzo
Berman	Grall	Polsky
Bernard	Gruters	Rodriguez
Boyd	Harrell	Rouson
Bracy Davis	Hooper	Sharief
Bradley	Jones	Simon
Brodeur	Leek	Smith
Burgess	Martin	Truenow
Burton	Massullo	Trumbull
Calatayud	Mayfield	Wright
Davis	McClain	Yarborough

## PRAYER

The following prayer was offered by Pastor Earl Glisson, Anchor Faith Church, St. Augustine:

Dear Heavenly Father, throughout the ages it has been foretold of the days we currently live—days of difficult times where people will love only themselves and their money. They will boast of great things and they will strut around in their arrogant pride being belligerent haters of what is good and right. They will become addicted to hateful and malicious slander. With brutal treachery, they will be ferocious, they will act without restraint, bigoted and wrapped in clouds of their conceit. They will ignore their own families being disobedient to their parents. They will be ungrateful and ungodly. They will find their delight in the pleasures of this world more than the pleasures of the loving God. They will go on pretending to be devoted to God, but they will refuse to let that devotion change the way they live.

Lord, we come to you in prayer, asking you grant these men and women of the Florida Senate the wisdom, knowledge, and moral clarity to legislate in the midst of chaotic events in our nation and the world. It is because of these difficult times many, if not all, have been elected to this Senate and ran for office. It is for this reason they were voted for by the citizens of our great state. For we have hope in them to fulfill their words to protect our freedoms, liberties, and rights as Floridians. May this Senate never be accused of living a double life or failing to honor the

oath it swore. But instead they unified for the common good of not only Floridians today but those in our future. That together they faced challenges with courage upholding the Constitution of our state. May this session be the greatest achievement of any Florida Senate because they were all willing to yield to the leading of your spirit.

Father, this fortitude does not come without persecution so, we pray for your divine protection over them, their families, and their staffs, shielding them from every false or misleading accusation. Strengthen them as they serve all who live in Florida, and remind them that they were called for such a time as this. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## PLEDGE

Senate Pages, Isabella Komando of Jacksonville; Leilany Otero of Miami Lakes; and Jerrett Vaughan of Tallahassee, son of Senate staffer Scotti Vaughan, led the Senate in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

## DOCTOR OF THE DAY

The President recognized Dr. Frank Rosemeier of Orlando, sponsored by Senator Brodeur, as the doctor of the day. Dr. Rosemeier specializes in anesthesiology and critical care medicine.

## REPORTS OF COMMITTEE RELATING TO EXECUTIVE BUSINESS

The Honorable Ben Albritton  
 President, The Florida Senate  
 Suite 409, The Capitol  
 404 South Monroe Street  
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100  
 January 14, 2026

Dear President Albritton:

The following executive appointments were referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections for action pursuant to Rule 12.7 of the Rules of the Florida Senate:

<i>Office and Appointment</i>		<i>For Term Ending</i>
Florida Citrus Commission		
Appointees:	Ezell, Emily	05/31/2027
	Frieliich, Sean H.	05/31/2027
	Hollingsworth, Vernon C., III	05/31/2028
	Hunt, Daniel H.	05/31/2026
	Johnson, Steve Allen	05/31/2028
	Martinez, Carlos H.	05/31/2026
	Poulton, William Scott	05/31/2028
	Schirard, John Patrick	05/31/2027
	Sutton, Daniel	05/31/2026
Board of Professional Surveyors and Mappers		
Appointees:	Cannon, Jennifer Hooten	10/31/2029
	Cross, Landon	10/31/2029
	Getz, Andrew R.	10/31/2028
	Sullivan, Jim	10/31/2028

The following executive appointments were referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General

Government and the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections for action pursuant to Rule 12.7 of the Rules of the Florida Senate:

*For Term  
Ending*

*Office and Appointment*

Governing Board of the St. Johns River Water Management District  
Appointees: Burnett, Douglas 03/01/2029  
Ghyabi-White, Maryam 03/01/2029

Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District  
Appointees: Hurley, Thomas W. 03/01/2029  
Spottswood, Robert A., Jr. 03/01/2026

Big Cypress Basin Board of the South Florida Water Management District  
Appointee: Lenhard, Michele 03/01/2026

Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District  
Appointees: Turner, James "Jim" 03/01/2027  
Watkins, Nancy Hemmingway 03/01/2029

The following executive appointments were referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Higher Education and the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections for action pursuant to Rule 12.7 of the Rules of the Florida Senate:

*Office and Appointment*

*For Term  
Ending*

Board of Trustees of Daytona State College  
Appointee: Lupoli, Nellie 05/31/2029

Board of Trustees of Hillsborough Community College  
Appointees: Garcia, Michael J. 05/31/2029  
Hollis, Mark Clayton, III 05/31/2029

Board of Trustees of Lake-Sumter State College  
Appointees: Croft, Roger L. 05/31/2029  
Scott, Samantha 05/31/2027

Board of Trustees of State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota  
Appointees: Infanti, Jennifer 05/31/2029  
Rose, Karen 05/31/2027

Board of Trustees of North Florida College  
Appointees: Hines, Malcolm L. 05/31/2029  
Taylor, Adrienne 05/31/2026  
Tillman, Daniel Brett 05/31/2029

Board of Trustees of Northwest Florida State College  
Appointee: Stevens, Lyndsi 05/31/2029

Board of Trustees of Pasco-Hernando State College  
Appointee: Harrington, Jeffrey E. 05/31/2026

Board of Trustees of Polk State College  
Appointee: Barnhart, Ann M. 05/31/2029

Board of Trustees of South Florida State College  
Appointee: Grimsley, Denise 05/31/2029

Board of Trustees of Tallahassee State College  
Appointee: Caban, Christian 05/31/2029

Florida Prepaid College Board  
Appointee: Starkey, Adria D. 06/30/2028

Board of Trustees, Florida State University  
Appointee: Murphy, Brian 01/06/2030

Board of Trustees, Florida Gulf Coast University  
Appointee: Saad, Henry 01/06/2030

Board of Trustees, Florida Polytechnic University

*For Term  
Ending*

*Office and Appointment*  
Appointees: Kigel, Beth Rochelle 07/15/2030  
Neelam, Sumanth 07/15/2029

Board of Trustees, University of Florida  
Appointees: Brandon, David Lee 01/06/2030  
Corr, Christopher T. 01/06/2031  
Hosseini, Morteza "Mori" 01/06/2031  
Powers, Marsha D. 01/06/2031  
Ridley, Fred 01/06/2031

The following executive appointments were referred to the Senate Committee on Community Affairs and the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections for action pursuant to Rule 12.7 of the Rules of the Florida Senate:

*Office and Appointment*

*For Term  
Ending*

Florida Housing Finance Corporation  
Appointee: Henderson, Fox Reynolds 11/13/2028

The following executive appointment was referred to the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice and the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections for action pursuant to Rule 12.7 of the Rules of the Florida Senate:

*Office and Appointment*

*For Term  
Ending*

Secretary of Juvenile Justice  
Appointee: Walsh, Matthew Pleasure of Governor

The following executive appointments were referred to the Senate Committee on Education Pre-K - 12 and the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections for action pursuant to Rule 12.7 of the Rules of the Florida Senate:

*Office and Appointment*

*For Term  
Ending*

Education Practices Commission  
Appointees: LaPee, Kenneth 08/18/2028  
Noblin, Jessica 09/30/2028  
Wicker, Alexandria 09/30/2028

Commission for Independent Education  
Appointee: Caballero, Nelson 06/30/2026

The following executive appointment was referred to the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections for action pursuant to Rule 12.7 of the Rules of the Florida Senate:

*Office and Appointment*

*For Term  
Ending*

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Appointee: Kellam, Joshua 08/01/2027

As required by Rule 12.7, the committees conducted an inquiry into the qualifications, experience, and general suitability of the above-named appointees for appointment to the office indicated. In aid of such inquiry, the committees held public hearings which members of the public were invited to attend and to offer evidence concerning the qualifications, experience, and general suitability of the appointees. After due consideration of the findings of such inquiry and the evidence adduced at the public hearings, the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections and other referenced committees respectfully advise and recommend that in accordance with s. 114.05(1)(c), F.S.:

(1) the executive appointments of the above-named appointees, to the office and for the term indicated, be confirmed by the Senate;

(2) Senate action on said appointments be taken prior to the adjournment of the 2026 Regular Session; and

(3) there is no necessity known to the committees for the deliberations on said appointments to be held in executive session.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Don Gaetz, Chair*

On motion by Senator Gaetz, the report was adopted and the Senate confirmed the appointments identified in the foregoing report of the committee to the offices and for the terms indicated in accordance with the recommendation of the committee.

The vote was:

Yeas—39

Mr. President	DiCeglie	Osgood
Arrington	Gaetz	Passidomo
Avila	Garcia	Pizzo
Berman	Grall	Polsky
Bernard	Gruters	Rodriguez
Boyd	Harrell	Rouson
Bracy Davis	Hooper	Sharief
Bradley	Jones	Simon
Brodeur	Leek	Smith
Burgess	Martin	Truenow
Burton	Massullo	Trumbull
Calatayud	Mayfield	Wright
Davis	McClain	Yarborough

Nays—None

Vote Preference:

Senator Arrington was recorded as voting “nay” on the appointment of Joshua Kellam to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Senator Smith was recorded as voting “nay” on the appointment of Joshua Kellam to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

**SPECIAL ORDER CALENDAR**

**SB 250**—A bill to be entitled An act relating to rural communities; reenacting and amending s. 20.60, F.S.; revising the list of divisions and offices within the Department of Commerce to conform to changes made by the act; revising the annual program reports that must be included in the annual report of the Department of Commerce; amending s. 163.3168, F.S.; requiring the state land planning agency to give preference for technical assistance funding to local governments located in a rural area of opportunity; requiring the agency to consult with the Office of Rural Prosperity when awarding certain funding; amending s. 201.15, F.S.; requiring that a certain sum be paid to the credit of the State Transportation Trust Fund for the exclusive use of the Florida Arterial Road Modernization Program; amending s. 202.18, F.S.; re-directing the transfer of certain communication services tax proceeds; amending s. 212.20, F.S.; revising the distribution of sales and use tax revenue to include a transfer to fiscally constrained counties; amending s. 215.971, F.S.; providing construction regarding agreements funded with federal or state assistance; requiring a state agency to expedite payment requests from a county, municipality, or rural area of opportunity for a specified purpose; requiring each state agency to report to the Office of Rural Prosperity by a certain date with a summary of certain information; requiring the office to summarize the information it receives for its annual report; amending s. 218.67, F.S.; revising the conditions required for a county to be considered a fiscally constrained county; authorizing eligible counties to receive a distribution of sales and use tax revenue; revising the sources that the Department of Revenue must use to determine the amount distributed to fiscally constrained counties; revising the factors for allocation of the distribution of revenue to fiscally constrained counties; requiring that the computation and amount distributed be calculated using certain methods; authorizing specified uses for the revenue; conforming a cross-reference; amending s. 288.001, F.S.; requiring the Florida Small Business Development Center Network to use certain funds appropriated for a specified purpose; authorizing the network to dedicate funds to facilitate certain events; amending s. 288.007, F.S.; revising which local governments and economic development organizations

seeking to recruit businesses are required to submit a specified report; creating s. 288.013, F.S.; providing legislative findings; creating the Office of Rural Prosperity within the Department of Commerce; requiring the Governor to appoint a director, subject to confirmation by the Senate; providing that the director reports to and serves at the pleasure of the secretary of the department; providing the duties of the office; requiring the office to establish by a specified date a certain number of regional rural community liaison centers across this state for a specified purpose; providing the powers, duties, and functions of the liaison centers; requiring each regional rural community liaison center, to the extent possible, to coordinate with certain entities; requiring the liaison centers to engage with the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI); requiring at least one staff member of a liaison center to attend the monthly REDI meetings in person or by means of electronic communication; requiring the director of the office to submit an annual report to the Administration Commission within the Executive Office of the Governor; specifying requirements for the annual report; requiring that the annual report also be submitted to the Legislature by a specified date and published on the office’s website; requiring the director of the office to attend the next Administration Commission meeting to present detailed information from the annual report; requiring the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to evaluate the effectiveness of the office and submit a report of its findings to the Legislature by a certain date annually until a specified date; requiring OPPAGA to submit its report the office at specified intervals; requiring OPPAGA to review certain strategies from other states; requiring OPPAGA to submit a report of its findings to the Legislature at certain intervals; creating s. 288.014, F.S.; providing legislative findings; requiring the Office of Rural Prosperity to administer the Renaissance Grants Program to provide block grants to eligible communities; requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to certify to the Office of Rural Prosperity certain information by a specified date; defining the term “growth-impeded”; requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to certify annually that a county remains growth-impeded until such county has positive population growth for a specified amount of time; providing that such county, after 3 consecutive years of population growth, is eligible to participate in the program for 1 additional year; requiring a county eligible for the program to enter into an agreement with the Office of Rural Prosperity in order to receive the block grant; giving such counties broad authority to design their specific plans; prohibiting the Office of Rural Prosperity from determining how such counties implement the block grant; requiring regional rural community liaison center staff to provide assistance, upon the county’s request; requiring participating counties to report annually to the Office of Rural Prosperity with certain information; providing that a participating county receives a specified amount from funds appropriated to the program, or an equal share of the funds appropriated if the total of such appropriated funds is insufficient to provide that amount; requiring participating counties to make all attempts to limit the amount spent on administrative costs; authorizing participating counties to contribute other funds for block grant purposes; requiring participating counties to hire and retain a renaissance coordinator; providing that funds from the block grant may be used to hire the renaissance coordinator; providing the responsibilities of the renaissance coordinator; requiring the regional rural community liaison center staff to provide assistance and training to the renaissance coordinator, upon request; requiring participating counties to design a plan to make targeted investments to achieve population growth and increase economic vitality; specifying requirements for such plans; requiring participating counties to develop intergovernmental agreements with certain entities in order to implement the plan; requiring the Auditor General to conduct an operational audit every 2 years for a specified purpose; requiring the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to provide an annual report on a specified date of renaissance block grant recipients by county; specifying requirements for the annual report; requiring that the report be submitted to the Legislature; providing that funds appropriated from the program are not subject to reversion; providing for expiration; creating s. 288.0175, F.S.; creating the Public Infrastructure Smart Technology Grant Program within the Office of Rural Prosperity; defining terms; requiring the office to contract with one or more smart technology lead organizations to administer the grant program for a specified purpose; providing the criteria for such contracts; requiring that projects funded by the grant program be included in the office’s annual report; amending s. 288.018, F.S.; requiring the office, rather than the Department of Commerce, to establish a grant program to provide funding for regional economic development organizations; revising who may apply for such