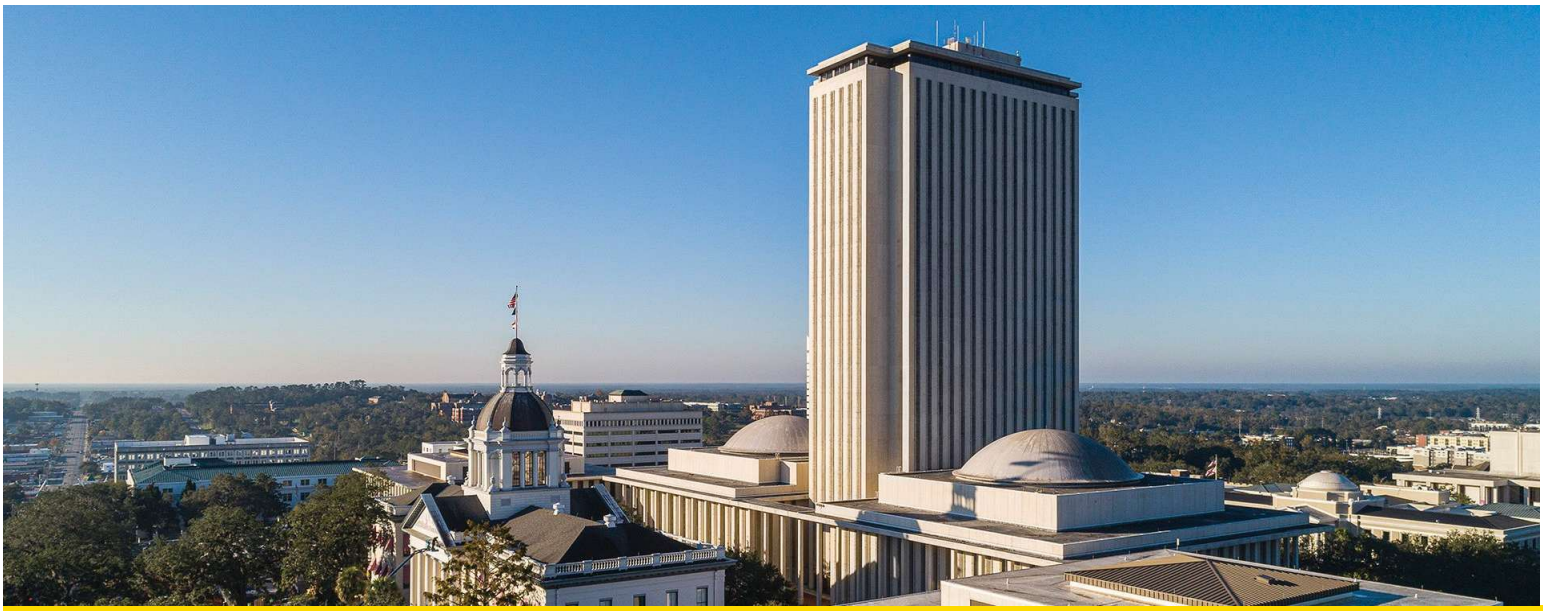


LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Friday, December 5, 2025
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. ET

Peninsula Ballroom 4
Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld
6677 Sea Harbor Dr
Orlando, FL 32821

FLC Staff Contact: Casey Cook and Mary Edenfield

FLC
FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

Legislative Committee
Friday, December 5, 2025 – 11:00 a.m. ET
Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld – Meeting Room: Peninsula Ballroom 4
6677 Sea Harbor Drive, Orlando, FL 32821

AGENDA

Presiding:

Chair: Mark Franks, FLC First Vice President and Mayor, Town of Shalimar
Vice Chair: Dr. Sarah Stoeckel, FLC Second Vice President and Councilmember, City of Titusville

I. Call to Order

II. Review of Process

III. Reports of Legislative Policy Committee Chairs
- A. Development, Code Compliance, and Redevelopment Committee
- B. Finance and Taxation Committee
- C. Intergovernmental Relations, Mobility, and Emergency Management Committee
- D. Municipal Operations Committee
- E. Utilities, Natural Resources, and Public Works Committee

IV. Adoption of Legislative Platform

V. Other Business

VI. Adjourn to Business Session

Internet Accessibility
If you are staying at the Renaissance, the instructions you received to connect to wireless in your room should also work in the meeting space. If you have any issues with that, or if you are not staying on-site, please connect to the ***Renaissance_Conference*** *network and open your internet browser. If you are not automatically redirected to the Renaissance login page, please type in any non-secure internet website. When prompted, enter* ***FLCLC25*** *as the password.*

2025 LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Chair: Mark Franks, Mayor, Town of Shalimar
First Vice President, Florida League of Cities
Vice Chair: Dr. Sarah Stoeckel, Councilmember, City of Titusville
Second Vice President, Florida League of Cities

Local and Regional League Representatives

Bryan Eastman, Commissioner, City of Gainesville
Representative, Alachua County League of Cities
Denise Horland, Councilmember, City of Plantation
President, Broward League of Cities
Tim Murry, Mayor, City of Clermont
President, Heartland League of Cities
Lisa Gonzalez Moore, Councilwoman, City of Bradenton
Vice President, ManaSota League of Cities
Omarr Nickerson, Mayor, Village of El Portal
President, Miami-Dade County League of Cities
John Eric Hoover, Mayor, City of Port Richey
Representative, Municipal Association of Pasco
Michele Myers, Mayor, City of Crescent City
President, Northeast Florida League of Cities
Bobby Wagner, Mayor, City of Destin
First Vice President, Northwest Florida League of Cities
JB Whitten, Mayor, City of Crestview
President, Okaloosa County League of Cities
JohnPaul O'Connor, Mayor, City of Westlake
First Vice President, Palm Beach County League of Cities
Brian Yates, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Winter Haven
Vice President, Ridge League of Cities
John R. King, Council Member, Town of Fort Myers Beach
Vice President, Southwest Florida League of Cities
Diana Adams, Council Member, City of West Melbourne
Vice President, Space Coast League of Cities
Andy Ross, Mayor, City of Temple Terrace
President, Suncoast League of Cities
Lewrissa Johns, Mayor, City of Chiefland
Representative, Suwannee River League of Cities
Linda Hudson, Mayor, City of Fort Pierce
President, Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities
Jordan Smith, Commissioner, City of Lake Mary
President, Tri-County League of Cities
Nancy Miller, Mayor, City of Daytona Beach Shores
President, Volusia League of Cities

FLC Committee Representatives

Joshua D. Fuller, Council Member, Town of Bay Harbor Islands
Chair, Development, Code Compliance, and Redevelopment Committee
Molly Young, Mayor, Village of Tequesta
Chair, Finance and Taxation Committee
Chris Cloudman, Mayor, City of DeLand
Chair, Intergovernmental Relations, Mobility, and Emergency Management Committee
Mac Fuller, Mayor, City of Lake Alfred
Chair, Municipal Operations Committee
Lois Paritsky, Mayor, Town of Ponce Inlet
Chair, Utilities, Natural Resources, and Public Works Committee
Dylan Rumrell, Mayor, City of St. Augustine Beach
Chair, Advocacy Committee
BJ Bishop, Commissioner, Town of Longboat Key
Chair, Federal Action Strike Team

Municipal Staff Association Representatives

Elizabeth Garcia-Beckford, MMC, MBA, City Clerk, City of Wilton Manors
President, Florida Association of City Clerks
Olivia Minshew, City Manager, City of Wauchula
Representative, Florida City and County Management Association
Darrel Donatto, Fire Chief, Town of Jupiter
Representative, Florida Fire Chiefs' Association
Kelly Strickland, CPA, CGFO Director of Financial Administration, City of Sarasota
President-Elect, Florida Government Finance Officers Association
Steve Parker, Chief of Police, City of Davenport
Representative, Florida Police Chiefs Association

FLC-Sponsored Program Representatives

Scott Black, Mayor, City of Dade City
Chair, Florida Municipal Insurance Trust
Isaac Salver, Vice Mayor, Town of Bay Harbor Islands
Chair, Florida Municipal Loan Council
Chris Cloudman, Mayor, City of DeLand
Chair, Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund
Steve Graber, Vice Mayor, City of Oldsmar
Chair, Florida Municipal Investment Trust

At Large Members

Santiago Avila, Mayor, City of Deltona
Michael C. Blake, Mayor, City of Cocoa
Peggy Brown, Mayor, City of Weston

Woody Brown, Mayor, City of Largo
Joyce L. Davis, Mayor, City of Dania Beach
Joseph McMullen, Commissioner, Town of Oakland
Fortuna Smukler, Commissioner, City of North Miami Beach

PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTING THE FLC LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE PROCEDURE:

The Legislative Committee is charged with reviewing the work of the five legislative policy committees. The League's 1st Vice President will preside over the meeting and the following procedure will be used to review and adopt the Legislative Platform:

- Each policy committee chair will be asked to present their committee's priority to the Legislative Committee.

- Each policy committee chair may also submit for approval by the Legislative Committee one policy position on another issue of importance to the policy committee.

- After each legislative policy committee report, the chair will accept questions from the Legislative Committee and/or the audience.

- Following a question and answer period, the chair will accept, if needed, a motion to limit debate.

- The chair will then accept a motion to adopt (with a second and discussion) the policy committee's report (as amended). This procedure will be repeated for each policy committee presentation.

The Legislative Committee Chair shall report the actions of the committee during the business session. The proposed Legislative Platform, as adopted by the Legislative Committee, will be posted on the FLC website and projected on a large screen in the meeting room. As was the procedure during the Legislative Committee, the audience will be provided an opportunity to ask questions.

BUSINESS SESSION PROCEDURES:

- The President will preside over the Business Session and shall call on the Chair of the Legislative Committee to present the proposed Legislative Platform as recommended by the Legislative Committee.

- The Legislative Committee Chair will present each policy committee priority statement and move for its adoption.

- The President will call for a second and an opportunity for discussion by the membership of the proposed priority statement. Following this, a consensus voice vote will be taken. This procedure will be used for each priority statement.

- If the consensus vote is challenged, the President will call for a short recess and the League staff will prepare for a recorded voting procedure. (**see attached**)

- After all amended sections have been considered and adopted, the President will call for adoption of Legislative Platform by the membership present.

APPENDIX - PROCEDURE FOR DIVIDED HOUSE

EXPLANATION:

During the Business Session of the Legislative Conference (following the meeting of the Legislative Committee), the League President will ask the membership present to adopt the Legislative Platform. This action does not require the appointment of voting delegates (as does the annual convention's business session), but it does create the possibility of a divided house, meaning that a voice vote did not determine a clear "will" of the membership present. This has not happened in recent League history, but it does need to be planned for in advance.

PROCEDURE:

- Upon the President's determination of a divided house (being that a voice vote did not indicate sufficient support for adoption of the Legislative Platform), the President will call for a brief (15 min.) recess so city officials may confer with others from their own councils. Some cities will have only one person present; some may not be represented at all.

- The cities will be directed to select a representative from their council and take a position amongst them on the adoption of the Legislative Platform. If a city wishes to record its divided vote, it may do so. If a city cannot come to agreement on selecting a representative or taking a position, the League will not record their position.

- The President would then call the Business Session back into session and ask that, by voice vote, the city representatives indicate their votes. If the vote is still divided, the city representatives would then come to a table staffed by League staff and record their vote. Only if it were necessary (in the case of a tie) would a weighted vote be taken.

- If the President determines there is dissension among the city officials in regards to a particular section of the Legislative Platform, he shall call upon the Chair of the appropriate policy committee to take questions and help guide the discussion.

Again, this process is provided for explanation but it is not expected to occur.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 Proposed Priorities and Policy Positions

Development, Code Compliance, and Redevelopment Committee

- Priority: Housing
- Policy Position: Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs)

Finance and Taxation Committee

- Priority: Property Taxes

Intergovernmental Relations, Mobility, and Emergency Management Committee

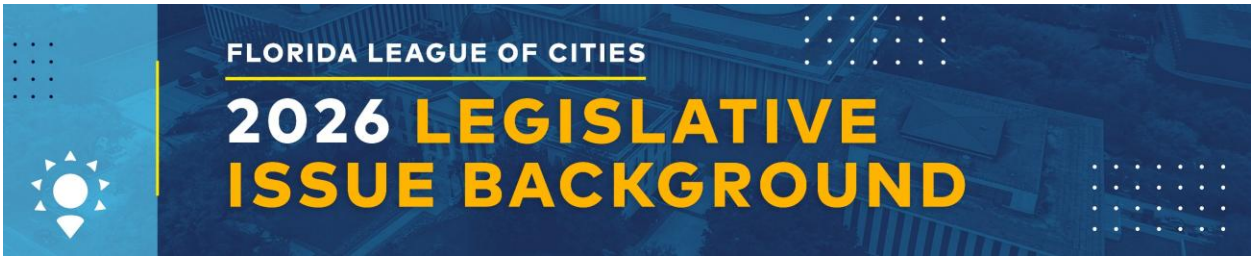
- Priority: Revising Sections 18 and 28 of Chapter 2025-190, Laws of Florida (SB 180 – Emergencies)
- Policy Position: Municipal Elections

Municipal Operations Committee

- Priority: Sovereign Immunity
- Policy Position: Public Records Exemption for Municipal Clerks and Staff

Utilities, Natural Resources, and Public Works Committee

- Priority: Enterprise Fund Transfers
- Policy Position: Extraterritorial Surcharges



Housing

Draft Priority Statement:
The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation that addresses Florida's urgent housing shortage while preserving the authority of local governments to manage growth consistent with each community's capacity to ensure public safety, resilience, and financial stability. Cities must retain the ability to decide where housing is located to preserve their unique identity—without additional state preemptions or expanded administrative approval requirements that erode public participation and residents' freedom to influence how their cities grow.

Background:
Florida's housing shortage remains one of the most urgent and far-reaching challenges facing communities across the state. Cities are confronting rising land and construction costs, limited developable land, and record population growth—all while striving to maintain infrastructure capacity and preserve community character. However, state lawmakers continue to pursue top-down housing preemptions that often limit local flexibility to balance growth, affordability, and the ability to preserve each city's unique identity.

The Live Local Act (2023–2025):
Originally enacted in 2023, the Live Local Act aimed to increase the supply of affordable and workforce housing through incentives, preemptions, and funding support. The law requires local governments to approve high-density multifamily developments in certain commercial, industrial, or mixed-use zones if a portion of the units are set aside for affordable housing. The Act was subsequently amended in 2024 and 2025 to further refine its land use, density, and implementation provisions.

In 2025, the Legislature enacted additional amendments to clarify and expand the Act's provisions. Some of these revisions included:

- **Expanded Applicability:** Authorizes Live Local projects in "flexibly zoned areas" (including PUDs) permitted for commercial, industrial, or mixed-use development, without the need for a density transfer or amendment to a development of regional impact.
- **Height and Density Standards:** Prohibits local governments from limiting project height below the highest allowed (or allowed as of July 1, 2023) within one mile of the site; defines floor area ratio broadly to include floor lot ratio and lot coverage.
- **Historic Districts:** Allows height restrictions only for projects involving contributing structures within National Register historic districts, but not below the highest allowed within ¾ mile or three stories, whichever is greater.
- **Administrative Approval:** Requires Live Local projects that meet multifamily zoning and comprehensive plan standards to receive administrative approval without hearings or board action.

- **Parking and Mixed Use:** Mandates a 15% parking reduction for projects near transit and limits nonresidential use in mixed-use projects to 10% of total square footage.
- **Religious Property Development:** Allows—but does not require—local governments to permit affordable housing on parcels owned by religious institutions that contain a house of worship, with at least 10% of units affordable.
- **Moratorium Restrictions:** Prohibits building moratoria that delay Live Local projects, except for limited infrastructure or flooding concerns; such moratoria may last no more than 90 days every three years and must include a local housing needs assessment.
- **Litigation and Reporting:** Requires attorney fees (up to $250,000) for prevailing parties in enforcement actions; mandates annual local reporting to DEO on approved Live Local projects beginning November 1, 2026.

Accessory Dwelling Units SB 48 (Gaetz) and HB 313 (Nix):

SB 48 and **HB 313** (2026 Session) would require every local government to adopt an ordinance by December 1, 2026, allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in all areas zoned for single-family residential use. The bills would:

- Require, rather than authorize, local governments to permit ADUs in single-family zones.
- Prohibit local governments from imposing owner-occupancy requirements or restricting ADUs rentals if rented for one month or longer
- Prohibit local governments from requiring replacement parking when a garage or driveway is converted to an accessory dwelling unit
- Require that ADUs providing affordable rental housing count toward a city's affordable housing component under its comprehensive plan
- Clarify that property owners will not lose their homestead exemption due to the presence of a rented ADU, although the ADU portion of the property would be separately assessed and taxed

Sadowski Coalition 2026 Priorities:

The Sadowski Housing Coalition represents cities, counties, housing advocates, and private-sector partners committed to preserving dedicated state funding for affordable housing. In 2026, the Coalition is calling for:

- Full funding of the SHIP and SAIL trust funds from documentary stamp revenues;
- $150 million for the Live Local SAIL Program; and
- $100 million for the Hometown Heroes homeownership program.

These initiatives remain Florida's primary tools for producing and preserving affordable housing.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BACKGROUND

Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs)

Draft Policy Position Statement:
The Florida League of Cities OPPOSES legislation limiting the authority or operation of Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs), which are vital tools for revitalizing neighborhoods and driving local economic growth. CRAs fund critical projects such as infrastructure, public safety, affordable housing, roads, drainage, and public spaces that improve communities statewide. The League supports accountability and transparency, but opposes weakening or eliminating CRAs.

Background:
Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs), established under Chapter 163, Part III, Florida Statutes, are among the most effective local tools for reversing blight, attracting private investment, and improving quality of life. CRAs are funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF), a mechanism that reinvests the increase in local property tax revenues generated within a redevelopment area back into that community. CRAs operate entirely with local funds, not state appropriations, and do not raise tax rates.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, legislation was filed that would have significantly restricted the authority and long-term viability of CRAs. **CS/CS/HB 991** (Giallombardo) and **CS/SB 1242** (McClain) initially sought to require all existing CRAs to sunset by September 30, 2045, prohibit the creation of new CRAs, and bar existing agencies from initiating new projects or issuing debt after October 1, 2025.

The Senate bill was later amended to remove the mandatory sunset and permit the creation of new CRAs, but imposed several new restrictions, including:

- Requiring newly created CRAs to be governed by municipal elected officials, with up to two additional members on a seven-member board;
- Prohibiting changes to existing CRA boundaries; and
- Restricting CRA expenditures for community events such as festivals, concerts, and parades.

Although the proposed legislation did not pass, these bills demonstrated a continued legislative effort to curtail local control over CRAs and their use of TIF funds. The League anticipates similar proposals during the 2026 Legislative Session.

CRAs remain an important redevelopment tool for many cities across the state for some of these reasons:

- **Locally Funded – No New Taxes:** CRAs rely solely on local TIF revenues that reinvest property tax growth into community improvements without raising taxes or using state funds. Eliminating CRAs could force cities to seek alternative revenue sources, potentially leading to higher taxes or greater reliance on state aid.
- **Private Investment and Job Creation:** CRAs attract private-sector investment, revitalize business districts, support small businesses, and create local jobs—reducing government dependency through private economic growth.

- **Addressing Florida's Housing Crisis:** CRAs promote workforce and affordable housing development without additional state dollars, helping alleviate the housing shortage through targeted local reinvestment.
- **Strong Oversight Already in Place:** The Legislature enacted **HB 9** (2019) to enhance CRA accountability, requiring annual reporting, ethics training, and spending restrictions. Rather than dismantling CRAs, lawmakers should refine these reforms to strengthen oversight while preserving this successful redevelopment tool.

CRAs are fiscally responsible, market-driven instruments that promote local investment, job creation, and affordable housing—without raising taxes or expanding state spending. The Florida League of Cities urges the Legislature to focus on improving oversight and accountability, not eliminating or restricting CRAs, to ensure continued revitalization of Florida's communities through local decision-making and private-sector partnership.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BACKGROUND

Property Taxes

Draft Priority Statement:
The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS local authority over equitable property tax decisions that fund essential services like public safety, infrastructure, parks, and programs that define a community. Reducing or eliminating this revenue without a reasonable replacement would destabilize city budgets, threaten city creditworthiness, and undermine local priorities. Cities are created by residents to protect their communities and residents' quality-of-life, and local tax decisions are essential to fulfilling that responsibility.

Background:
In Florida and nationwide, property owners and interested parties desiring to own a home face a variety of obstacles. Most notably is the cost of housing in Florida. Additional obstacles include the price of insurance, available inventory of properties for sale or rent, and high interest rates for loans. Often the rate and amount of property taxes are identified as an obstacle as well.

In recent legislative sessions, bills have been filed to either increase the dollar amount of homestead exemptions, add homestead exemptions, provide property tax exemptions for first responders, essential workers, veterans (spouses of deceased veterans), or to commission a study to eliminate property taxes altogether and replace them with consumption taxes. The League has consistently opposed these efforts.

On the 2024 ballot, the voters approved Amendment 5 (**HJR 7017-2024**). This amendment placed an adjustment to the second homestead exemption to account for inflation year after year when inflation increases.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, conversations continued regarding property tax reform. The Governor took the lead by calling for the complete elimination of property taxes. This call for repeal has been narrowed to target only homestead properties in recent press events. No official proposal from the Governor has been provided.

The State Legislature has taken two different courses of action in response to the Governor's call for reform or repeal. The House of Representatives has formed the Select Committee on Property Taxes to gather information and present proposals for property tax reform to be considered. The goal of this Select Committee is to reduce the proposals to bill form and to have them ready for consideration and a vote early in the 2026 Legislative Session.

The Senate were proponents of a formal study into how property taxes work and what alternatives may readily exist. However, the efforts at a formal study were vetoed in the 2025 State of Florida Budget by Governor DeSantis. Recently, the Senate President's office has spoken about taking a very judicious and cautious approach to property tax reform and assuring fiscally constrained communities that they are being considered due to the negative impacts they would face budgetarily.

For most of the proposals being discussed, reform may only be achieved through a constitutional amendment, voted on by the electorate of the State of Florida, and achieve a minimum of 60% approval.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BACKGROUND

Revising Sections 18 and 28 of Chapter 2025-190, Laws of Florida (SB 180 – Emergencies)

Draft Priority Statement:
The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation to clarify Sections 18 and 28 of SB 180 (2025). The law goes far beyond assisting storm-damaged properties and prevents responsible community planning and flood control. Legislative clarification should: limit the law's applicability to jurisdictions that experience measurable impacts from hurricanes; provide definitions for overbroad and vague terms; limit its scope to storm-damaged properties; and clarify provisions relating to standing, pre-suit notice, and opportunity to cure.

Background:
SB 180, passed in the 2025 Legislative Session and signed into law, has sparked controversy throughout Florida due to its sweeping restrictions on local government authority. SB 180 was introduced by House and Senate sponsors as a hurricane preparedness and response measure. The bulk of SB 180 achieved these aims, and those provisions were supported by the League. Unfortunately, sections 18 and 28 of SB 180 as written do not support these purposes.

According to the bill sponsors, sections 18 and 28 were included because the sponsors were concerned that some local governments were using the cover of hurricane response to increase building permit fees and to enact regulations to make it harder for storm-damaged properties to rebuild. As such, the sponsors wanted to include measures to protect the owners of storm-damaged properties from local regulations that impeded their repair and rebuild efforts. The express language of sections 18 and 28 goes much farther than that.

Section 18 creates a "rolling preemption" that applies prospectively and in perpetuity to all cities and counties entirely or partially within 100 miles of a hurricane's "track." For one year after "landfall," these governments are prohibited from adopting or enforcing any development moratorium, as well as more "restrictive or burdensome" comprehensive plan amendments, land development regulation, procedures. It authorizes a cause of action against local governments for "any person" to enjoin local government actions alleged to violate this section. The plaintiff must notify the local government before filing suit and the local government has 14 calendar days to withdraw the regulation. It awards attorney fees to a prevailing plaintiff.

Section 28 applies retroactively to every county (and municipalities within them) listed in the federal disaster declaration for hurricanes Milton, Debby, and Helene. It applies similar prohibitions on moratoria, comprehensive plan amendments, land development regulations, and procedures as Section 18. The prohibitions apply retroactively to August 1, 2024, and until October 1, 2027. It declares any local regulation in violation of this section void. It provides a

similar cause of action (limited to “businesses and residents”) and attorney fee recovery as Section 18.

SB 180 has largely brought comprehensive planning, flooding and stormwater management, and land use planning to a standstill. It prevents local governments from implementing statutorily-mandated updates to comprehensive plans and land development regulations, prevents enactment of measures to protect property owners from flooding due to hurricanes and other natural events, impedes local government compliance with state-mandated nutrient reduction requirements, prohibits concurrency-related moratoria, and jeopardizes measures to ensure growth pays for itself, such as impact and mobility fees. Moreover, the bill authorizes virtually any person, regardless of cognizable legal injury, to sue a local government and recover attorney’s fees. The bill grants an illusory 14-day window for local governments to rescind a challenged regulation to avoid a suit. This window is illusory because statutory public notice and meeting requirements cannot be met within this 14-day period. The legal status of thousands of local regulations is uncertain because the bill voids all of them.

The bill abdicates policy-setting to the judiciary by not defining multiple subjective and vague terms, including the following: landfall, track of a hurricane, and burdensome and restrictive. The bill is overbroad (section 28 applies to every city and county in Florida), granting carte blanche for the unchecked development of vacant land with zero storm damage. The bill’s failure to provide an objective basis for local governments and property owners to decide whether the bill’s terms apply to a situation means the judicial branch will be forced to define these terms. Local taxpayers will underwrite the cost of adjudicating the meaning of SB 180, lawsuit by lawsuit.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BACKGROUND

Municipal Elections

Draft Policy Position Statement:
The Florida League of Cities OPPOSES legislation that restricts municipal voters' authority to set municipal election dates.

Background:
Elections for municipal officers are conducted during the general election in November of even-numbered years unless the governing body of a municipality has adopted an ordinance or charter to change the dates for qualifying and for the election of members of the governing body of the municipality. Many cities have staggered terms, meaning a five-member council with three-year terms holds elections each year with one or two seats on the ballot. Staggered terms improve stability of the governing body and allow for continuity of knowledge about city operations within the elected body as individual officials come and go over time.

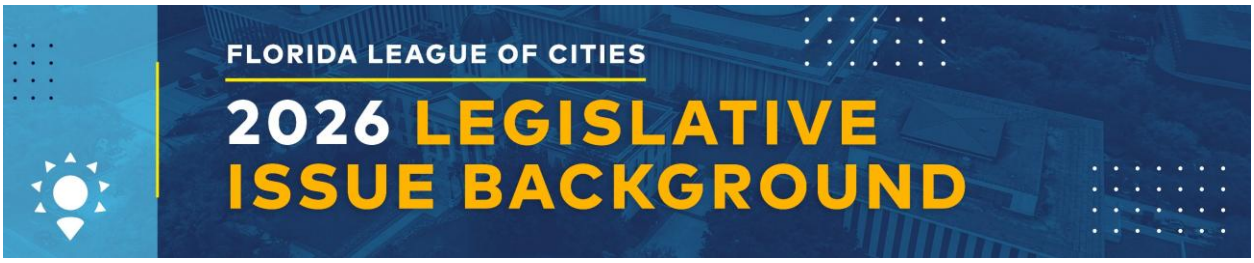
Over half of Florida's cities have election dates that differ from the date of the November general election in even-numbered years. For many cities, voters codified the municipal election date in the charter. Cities handle the cost of city elections and usually contract with the local supervisor of elections to conduct municipal elections on their behalf. Alternatively, cities may conduct their own elections using their own voting system and equipment and not contract with the local supervisor of elections.

The best time and date for a municipal election will vary based on community needs and preferences. It's a false assumption that high voter turnout in November elections translates into increased voter participation on municipal ballot issues in that same election. Combining municipal elections into the same date as county, state, and national elections will make it difficult for municipal candidates to compete for voter attention in saturated media markets and on crowded ballots. For over half of cities that provide for runoff elections, municipal campaigns will be in full swing during summer and winter holidays, when voters are highly distracted or absent, and media access exceedingly expensive.

Who will be affected?

- Municipalities that currently hold elections on any date other than the dates specified in state law
- Municipalities that currently hold their general election on the November general election date in even-numbered years, but which currently provide for a runoff election on a date after the November general election
- Municipalities with staggered election dates (elections in both odd- and even-numbered years)

Status:
Proposals to preempt municipal election dates advanced in 2016, 2017, and 2018. **SB 1416** (DiCeglie) was filed in the 2025 session but did not pass. The bill sponsor vowed to file the bill again in 2026. SB 1416 would have required that elections for municipal offices be held on the same date as the November general election (even-numbered years). If a municipality requires a runoff election, the bill required such municipality to hold its initial election on the same date as the primary election on Tuesday, 11 weeks before the general election, and to hold the runoff on the same date as the general election. The bill preempted to the state the authority to establish election dates for municipal elections and required that municipal recall elections be held concurrently with municipal elections under certain conditions. The bill extended the term of incumbent elected municipal officers until the next municipal election held per the new election dates required by the bill.



Sovereign Immunity

Draft Priority Statement:
The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS maintaining reasonable limits or 'caps' on monetary damages recoverable in negligence claims against government entities. These protections are crucial to safeguard Florida's taxpayers.

Background:
Sovereign immunity is a principle under which a government cannot be sued without its consent. Article X, section 13 of the Florida Constitution allows the Legislature to waive this immunity. It allows for suits in tort against the state and its agencies and subdivisions for damages resulting from the negligence of government employees acting in the scope of employment. This liability exists only where a private person would be liable for the same conduct.

Since 2011, Florida caps tort recovery from a governmental entity at $200,000 per person and $300,000 per incident. Prior to 2011, caps were previously set at $100,000 and $200,000, respectively. A judgment may be awarded above the statutory caps. However, recovering damages above these caps requires a special claims bill passed by the Legislature for a claimant to collect.

Capping tort claims against Florida’s government entities is necessary to protect taxpayers while ensuring that cities can continue to provide essential services. Services such as police and fire carry an inherent high degree of risk. However, these services are essential for all Floridians. The ability to collect larger settlements or judgments against government entities will serve to increase liability exposure and incentivize litigation, threatening the ability to provide the same level of services.

Local government entities are limited by state law in their ability to generate revenue or increase taxes. City budgets are already stretched thin. Increasing the sovereign immunity limits to unreasonably high levels puts cities at risk of a huge financial burden. To compound the gravity of these potential impacts, the insurance market in Florida is currently incredibly volatile. Securing adequate insurance has been difficult for cities. Florida’s government entities have seen very large increases to insurance premiums over the last couple of years. Increasing the sovereign immunity limits will have a dramatic financial impact to all of Florida’s government entities, and especially Florida's cities, which have limited resources.

HB 301 (McFarland) sought to raise the statutory caps to $1 million per person and $3 million per incident, with further increases scheduled by 2030. After amendments in the House Judiciary Committee, the bill proposed phased-in caps: $500,000 per person/$1 million per incident (effective October 1, 2025), and $600,000 per person/$1.1 million per incident (effective October 1, 2030). The bill also would have allowed local governments to settle claims above the statutory limits without a claims bill and prohibited insurance carriers from conditioning payouts on legislative approval of claims bills.

Despite passing in the House, the Senate version (**SB 1570**), failed to advance, and therefore no changes to sovereign immunity were enacted during the 2025 session. The statutory caps remain $200,000 per person and $300,000 per incident, unchanged since 2011.

On October 10, 2025, Representative McFarland filed **HB 145**, which increases the sovereign immunity caps to $500,000 per person and $1 million per incident for claims occurring between October 1, 2026, and October 1, 2031. For claims occurring after October 1, 2031, the caps will rise to $600,000 per person and $1.2 million per incident.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BACKGROUND

Public Records Exemption for Municipal Clerks and Staff

Draft Policy Position Statement:
The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS legislation that provides a public records exemption for the personal information of municipal clerks; as well as investigative personnel and employees who perform municipal elections work.

Background:
Many municipal staff who perform duties that include, or result in, investigations into complaints regarding election fraud, legal enforcement of hearings related to neglect or abuse, or other activities that could lead to a criminal prosecution, are exposed to threats and other acts of violence.

Municipal clerks often administer elections. Election workers are often targeted for threats and violence due to the nature of materials for which they are responsible. Further, clerks are often involved in legal enforcement proceedings in actions related to violations of codes and ordinances. Occasionally, these proceedings have led to retaliation and threats by defendants, creating a safety concern for clerks and staff.

Last session, **HB 517** (Casello) and **SB 840** (Rodriguez) were filed. The bills proposed a public records exemption for the personal identifying and location information of current municipal clerks and their staff, as well as the spouses and children of such clerks. It included retroactive application, a statement of public necessity, and a provision for future legislative review and repeal. Both bills failed to receive hearings in the House and the Senate.

In October 2025, Senator Rodriguez filed **SB 248** and Representative Campbell filed the companion, **HB 247**.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BACKGROUND

Enterprise Fund Transfers

Draft Priority Statement:
The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS preserving municipal authority over the use of utility revenues to ensure equitable cost recovery and financial sustainability, including the ability to reinvest in system maintenance and transfer funds to the general fund. Maintaining this flexibility enables municipalities to sustain essential services and manage budgets responsibly for their community.

Background:
During the 2025 Legislative Session, legislators again proposed restrictions on how municipalities may use revenues generated from providing electric, natural gas, water, and wastewater utility services outside their corporate limits. Similar measures have surfaced in recent sessions and continue to receive attention. The 2025 bills (**HB 1523** and **SB 1704**) would have limited municipalities to no more than 10% of gross extraterritorial utility revenues for general government functions and required any remaining excess to be reinvested in the utility or returned to those customers; the cap is fixed in statute and does not expressly provide exemptions for existing obligations such as debt service or contracted projects. The House bill advanced through committee and passed the House floor with a vote of 80-31. The Senate companion bill was never heard, and as a result, both bills were successfully defeated.

Municipal utilities are integral to local finances, and transfers from enterprise funds to general funds have long served as a return on public investment. Many cities, especially small and fiscally constrained ones with limited property tax bases, depend on these transfers to maintain essential public safety, transportation, and community services. Restricting this discretion could create uncertainty for municipal budgets, impair existing bond obligations, and destabilize long-term capital planning. Investor-owned utilities are permitted to earn a reasonable rate of return for shareholders; municipal utilities should retain similar flexibility for the public benefit. In most cases, municipalities reinvest utility revenues into operations, maintenance, and infrastructure before transferring any portion to the general fund.

Maintaining local authority over these revenues preserves financial stability, enables planned reinvestment, and upholds the principle that community-owned utilities should continue to operate for the benefit of the residents they serve – a position the League has consistently defended against threats proposed in consecutive legislative sessions.

FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES

2026 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BACKGROUND

Extraterritorial Surcharges

Draft Policy Position Statement:
The Florida League of Cities SUPPORTS maintaining municipal authority to establish reasonable extraterritorial surcharges that reflect the actual cost of providing services outside city limits. These surcharges protect municipal residents from subsidizing outside customers, promote efficient regional service, and often originate as municipal initiatives to assist counties and unincorporated residents. Statutory notice and public hearing requirements provide transparency and accountability, ensuring municipal utilities remain fair, open, and responsive to their communities.

Background:
Proposals to restrict municipal authority over extraterritorial utility rates have appeared in multiple consecutive legislative sessions and have not lost momentum. While each version has differed in structure, the overall goal has been to narrow how municipalities recover costs from customers located outside city boundaries. The 2023 bills (**HB 1331**/**SB 1380**) would have halved the statutory surcharges authorized under current law and imposed fluctuating limits on fund transfers tied to investor-owned utility returns – creating budget uncertainty, potential conflicts with existing bond obligations, and disproportionate impacts on smaller and fiscally constrained cities. More recent proposals, such as **HB 1523** (2025) and its Senate companion, have taken a different approach by capping total rates, fees, and charges for extraterritorial customers to no more than 25% above in-city rates and introducing annual reporting to the Public Service Commission.

Extraterritorial surcharges allow cities to equitably recover the added costs of providing service beyond municipal limits. This covers infrastructure expansion, maintenance, and operational risk, while ensuring non-resident customers who do not contribute to the city's tax base pay a fair share. Limiting this authority could undercut the financial sustainability of local utility systems and reduce the resources available for reinvestment in essential infrastructure.

Maintaining flexibility for all municipalities to establish reasonable surcharges remains vital for protecting rate equity, ensuring reliable service, and preserving local control in utility management – a position the League has consistently defended against threats proposed in consecutive legislative sessions.