

The Bottom Line: 2019 Pre-Session Observations

For anyone who has joined a recent FHBA Governmental Affairs call, the 2019 Legislative Session has the look and feel of one to be dominated by construction related issues. Nearly every candidate mentioned the need to enhance career and technical education opportunities.

Workforce

Several proposals enhancing the workforce training are pending, including one which requires each school district to provide a Career/Technical Education Training program; an alternative education pathway for vocational students. Another FHBA workforce education priority creates a funding source for the Construction Industry Workforce Consortium. This entity works on strategies to address the negative perception of trade industry jobs by today's youth and serves as a one-stop resource for policy makers and educators to learn what trades are experiencing the most acute shortages.

Sadowski Trust Fund

Providing for more affordable housing permeates both political parties. Henceforth the filing of legislation prohibiting the legislature from raiding the Sadowski Trust Fund and a bill allowing local governments to forgo impact fees for affordable housing projects.

Local Governments

Legislation has been or expected to be filed to address local governments' cost driving abuses for home building. These include: Charging "max" impact fees, mandating impact fees at the time of platting (it can be a decade or more from platting to building), maintaining excessive funds in building permit funds, running up the costs of housing with unnecessary permit delays, and failing to allow home builders to fully capitalize on the efficiencies associated with private inspectors.

Septic Tanks

Several legislative committees already held discussions about septic tanks and their impact on the environment. A slew of local appropriations bills seek state funding for conversion of septic to sewer. Just this past week, legislation was filed to move the state's septic tank regulation away from the Department of Health to the Department of Environmental Protection. A concept supported by FHBA to attract more advanced nitrogen technologies to Florida.

Unlicensed Contractors

Four State Senators have engaged the FHBA and asked for help in crafting legislation to assist in the disciplining and, when appropriate, the prosecution of fraudulent contractors. FHBA leaders have been working diligently to create a solution that gets to the unethical actors, while maintaining protections and due process for the vast majority of upstanding contractors.

This is just a glimpse of the issues we will be working on in the 2019 Legislative Session.

How can you help?

Stay attuned to and please respond to any Grassroots Alerts. Sometimes, legislators just need a push from hometown voters. Monitor the weekly session GA calls to stay abreast of the issues and the meetings are open to all FHBA members. Jump in on any issue discussion and let us know what you think. The GA calls are every Friday during session at 2:00 PM EST. Session is from Tuesday, March 5-Friday, May 3rd. The conference call information:

Call in Number: (515) 739-1015

Access Code: 577-292-813#

Finally, attend our 2019 FHBA Legislative Conference on the Hill, March 11-13, 2019. It is important that legislators understand the issues are not just important to your lobbying staff, but are of interest to voting business interests back home.

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