



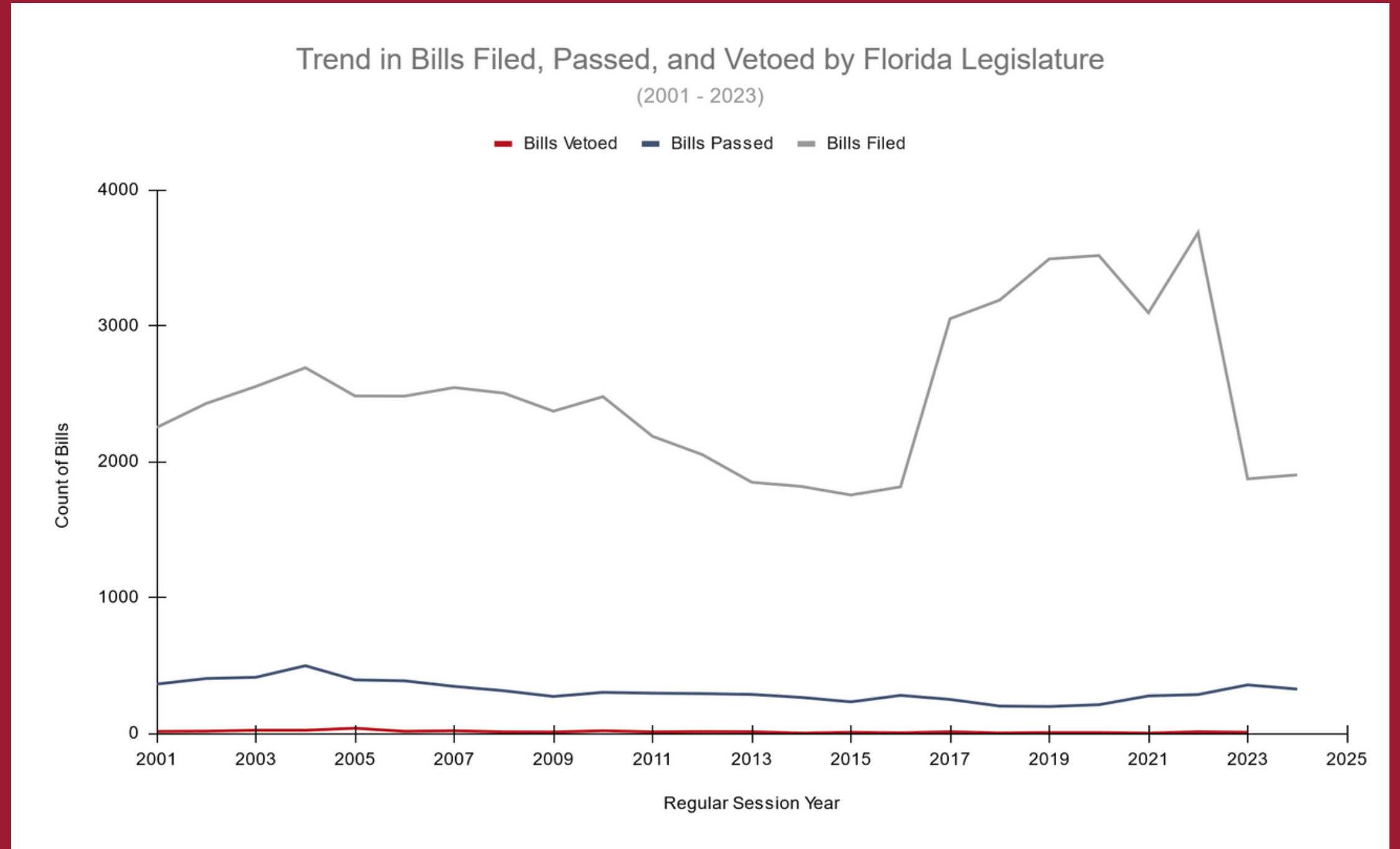
# Pinellas County 2024 State Legislative Update

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# Session Stats

- 1,957 bills were filed this session.
- 325 bills passed both chambers.
- 2,196 amendments were filed in both chambers.
- 43 floor sessions were held.
- 3,051 votes were taken.



# State Budget Highlights

## Recording-breaking budget

Budget negotiations between the House and Senate yielded a historic \$117.46 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

This includes \$10 billion in reserves

### Transportation, Infrastructure & Economic Development

16.17%

### K-12 & Higher Education

27.32%

### Public Safety

5.80%

### Environment

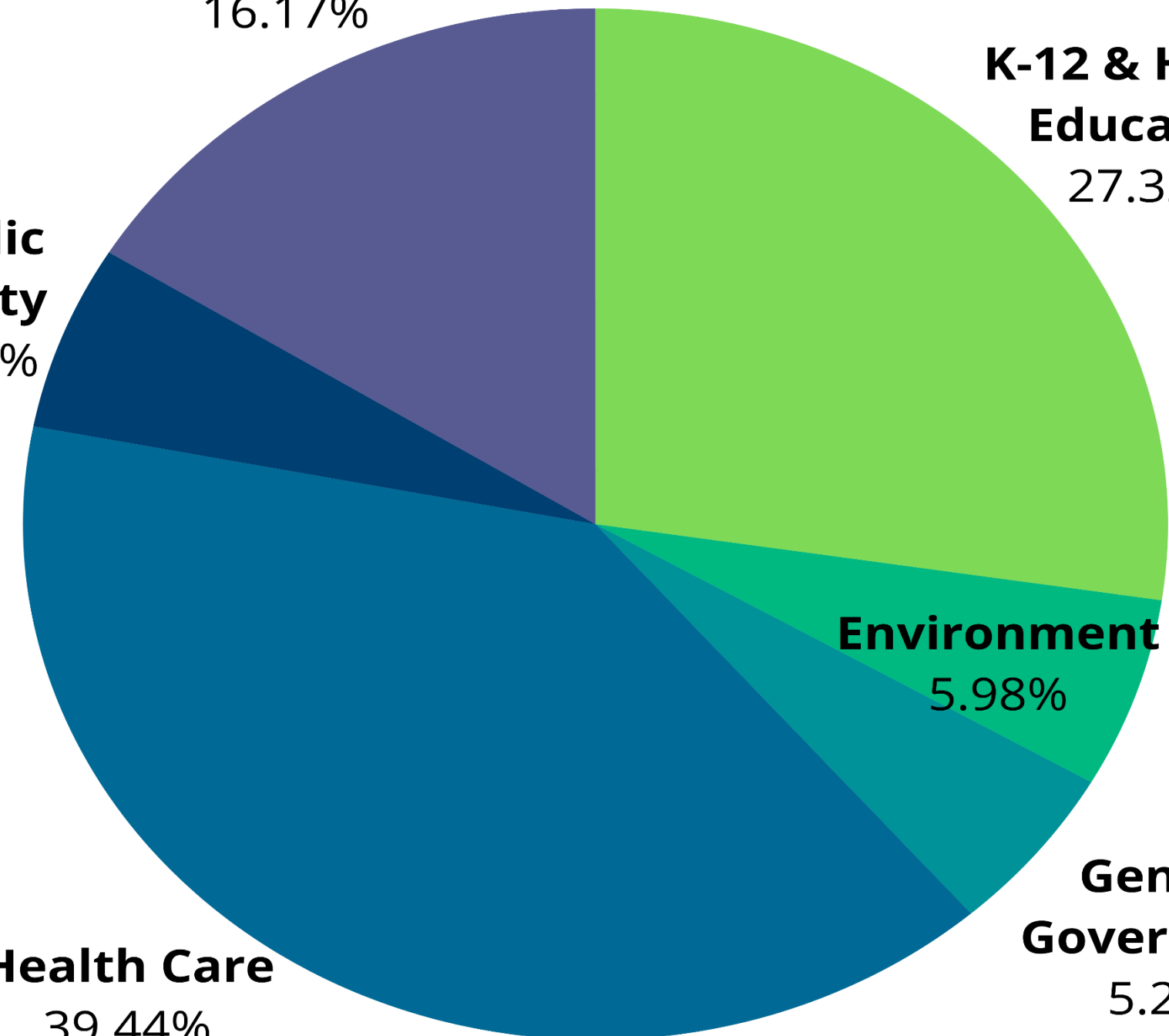
5.98%

### Health Care

39.44%

### General Government

5.28%



# Pinellas County Budget Items

East Lake Road at Keystone Road Intersection Improvements - \$1,000,000

Pinellas County Ridgcrest Neighborhood Water Quality Improvements Project - \$650,000

Pinellas County Emergency Generators Replacement - \$1,000,000

- The final budget was passed by both chambers on March 7, 2024 and is waiting to be sent to the Governor for final approval. Once the Governor receives the final budget, he will have 14-days, per the State Constitution, to line-item veto or approve the budget.

# Budget Highlights

The budget for Fiscal Year 23-24 totals \$117.5 billion, and includes nearly \$10 billion in reserve funding.

## Affordable Housing:

- State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program: \$174M
- State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) program: \$234M
- Florida Hometown Hero Housing Program: \$100M
  - This program provides down payment and closing cost assistance to first-time, income-qualified homebuyers so they can purchase a primary residence in the community in which they work and serve. The Florida Hometown Heroes Loan Program also offers a competitive first mortgage interest rate and additional special benefits to those who have served and continue to serve their country. Eligible frontline community workers are law enforcement officers, fire fighters, educators, healthcare professionals, childcare employees, and active military or veterans.

## Transportation Funding

- Transportation Work Program: \$13.98B

## Cybersecurity:

\$40 million in funding from the previous fiscal year budget is appropriated for the same purpose for nonrecurring assistance to local governments for the development and enhancement of cybersecurity risk management programs

# Budget Highlights

The budget for Fiscal Year 23-24 totals \$117.5 billion, and includes nearly \$10 billion in reserve funding.

## Environment

- Resilient Florida Grant Program- \$150M
- Drinking Water and Wastewater Revolving Loan programs -\$1.3 billion
- Wastewater Grant Program - \$135M
- Florida Forever- \$100M, including \$15M for Florida Communities Trust, which funds urban parks

## Tourism & Economic Development

- Visit Florida- \$80M
  - Specifically, \$5 million from the Tourism Promotional Trust Fund is provided for VISIT FLORIDA to develop marketing for nature-based tourism and trail towns.
- Job Growth Grant Fund - \$130.4 million

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Affordable Housing Clarifications (SB 328/ HB 1239)

The bill amends the 2023 Live Local Act's land use and zoning provisions for affordable multifamily rental developments to:

- Preempt a local government's floor area ratio for qualifying developments.
- Specify that a local government must reduce parking requirements for qualifying developments by at least 20 percent if the development is located within one-half mile of certain transportation facilities and has available parking within 600 feet. Modify the building height entitlement to address situations where a qualifying development is adjacent to single family parcels.
- Make clarifying changes pertaining to the density, height, and floor area ratio entitlements for qualifying developments.
- Require local governments to publish procedures and expectations for the administrative approval of qualifying developments.
- Clarify that only the affordable units in a qualifying development must be rental units.
- Impose special qualifiers for developments within a transit-oriented development or area. The bill makes a special provision to allow an applicant of a qualifying development who applied to the local government prior to the effective date of the bill to proceed under the applicable land use and zoning provisions of the Live Local Act as they existed as the time of submittal of the application.

# Tax Package

## HB 7073- Taxation

Each session, the Legislature passes a comprehensive tax relief package. Contains provisions for tax relief and changes to tax policy including:

- Reduces the sales tax rate on commercial leases from 4.5 percent to 2 percent beginning June 1, 2024, assuming certain thresholds are met before June 1.
- 4 sales tax holidays:
  - 14-day “back-to-school” tax holiday;
  - Two 14-day “disaster preparedness tax holidays for specified disaster preparedness supplies;
  - One-month “Freedom Month” tax holiday for specified recreational items and activities;
  - 7-day “Tool Time” tax holiday for tools/equipment used in skilled trades.
- Appropriates \$450 million to the Toll Relief Program
- Includes a 1-year relief for residential property insurance policyholders, covering the cost of insurance premium tax and the State Fire Marshal assessment for residential property insurance policies written between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025, for a twelve-month coverage period.

The final bill passed by the House and Senate DID NOT include:

- 6-year Repeal and Reauthorization of Tourist Development Taxes
- 10-year Repeal and Reauthorization of Local Option Sales Taxes



## **Affordable Housing Provisions:**

Revises the “Missing Middle” Property Tax Exemption authorized in s. 197.1978(3) to allow a taxing authority to opt out of the exemption for its levy by a two-thirds vote if:

- A finding is made by a taxing authority that the most recently published Shimberg Center for Housing Studies Annual Report identifies that a county that is part of the jurisdiction the taxing authority is within a Metropolitan Statistical area or region where the number of affordable and available units is greater than the number of renter households for the category entitled “0 -120 percent AMI”.
- The opt out is good for two years and may be reenacted if the above conditions are again met.
- Any property that has received the exemption prior to a local government opting out will continue to receive the exemption.
- Creates a new Property Tax Exemption for Affordable Housing Properties (s. 197.1978 (4)).

The exemption is available to properties that all the following conditions:

Properties that contain 70 or more units

- Subject to a land use restriction requiring the units are to provide affordable housing to persons or families meeting the extremely low, very low or low income for a period of 99 years.
- Must be substantially completed within 2 years of the date of application.
- Must be composed of an improvement to land where no previous improvement existed, or an old improvement was removed.

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Expedited Approval of Residential Building Permits - SB 812/ HB 665

- Requires municipalities/ counties to establish a development program for subdivisions and planned communities with a two-step process for obtaining a preliminary and final plat.
- Allows developers to obtain building permits and begin the construction process prior to the issuance of final plat.
- Provides numerous protections for local governments as it relates to indemnification and performance bonds to hold the developers accountable.

## Alternative Mobility Funding System - SB 688/ HB 479

- Mandates that local governments use recent and localized data for determination of impact fees in the authorizing study.
- Requires coordination of transportation impact fee calculations and collections among local governments where a city and a county impose fees on a development: •

## Vacation Rentals - SB 280/ HB 1537

- Implements regulations for vacation rentals, including registration, inspection, and operation guidelines, and mandates advertising platforms to collect and remit taxes on rentals.
- Allows local government to require registration of vacations rentals. Requirements include: Identifying information about the owner and the operator of the vacation rental, proof of license issued by DBPR and that all required tax registration has been obtained, payment in full all outstanding code liens, maximum occupancy not to exceed two persons per bedroom, among others.

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Vacation Rentals - SB 280/ HB 1537 (continued)

- Adds to the scope of the state preemption of public lodging establishments and public food service establishments by preempting “licensing” regulations, and revises the scope of the express state preemption on vacation rentals to allow local jurisdictions to amend local regulations to:
  - Be less restrictive; or
  - Comply with local registration requirements.
- Allows local governments to implement a local vacation rental registration program.
- Provides that the statutory provisions governing the local registration of vacation rentals do not apply to any county law, ordinance, or regulation initially adopted on or before January 1, 2016, that established county registration requirements for rental of vacation rentals, and any amendments thereto adopted before January 1, 2024.
- Provides that such county law, ordinance, or regulation may not be amended or altered except to be less restrictive or to adopt registration requirements as provided in such provisions.
- Authorizes local governments to charge a reasonable fee per unit for processing an individual registration application.
- Authorizes local governments to charge a reasonable fee for certain inspections.
- Allows local governments to fine vacation rental operators up to \$500, file and foreclose on a lien based on the fine, suspend registrations, and employees, and revoke or refuse to renew a registration, for violations of the local registration requirements.

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Unauthorized Public Camping and Public Sleeping- HB 1365 / SB 1530

This bill prohibits a county or municipality from authorizing or otherwise allowing any person from regularly engaging in public camping or sleeping on any public property, public building, or public right-of-way under the counties or municipality's jurisdiction, unless the county designates property for such purposes.

- By a majority vote of the county's governing body may approve a designated area of public property to be used for purposes of public camping or sleeping for a continuous period of no longer than one year. If the designated property is within the boundaries of a municipality, this approval is contingent upon the consent of the municipality by a majority vote of its governing body.
- A county designation is not effective until the Department of Children and Families certifies the designation. In order to obtain this certification, a county must submit a request to the Secretary of the Department certifying and providing documents proving the following:
  - There are not sufficient open beds in homeless shelters in the county for the homeless population.
  - The designated property is not contiguous to a property designed for residential use by the county or municipality in the local government comprehensive plan and future land use map.
  - The designated property would not adversely and materially affect the property value or safety of existing residential property, commercial property, or children within the county or municipality.
  - Beginning January 1, 2025 – a person or business is authorized to bring a civil action against any county or municipality to enjoin a violation of the prohibitions and conditions and to recover their attorney fees and costs.
- Status: Signed into law by Governor DeSantis on March 20, 2024

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Deregulation of Public Schools - SB 7002

- The bill establishes deregulation measures for public school district finance, budgeting, facilities, and oversight, aimed at increasing flexibility and reducing regulatory burdens on district school boards.
- As part of this deregulation, the bill revises the current requirement in s. 252.38, F.S., that school boards provide necessary personnel to *staff* facilities used as emergency shelters. The new provision of requires school boards to provide necessary personnel to *access* the facilities or provide other duties related to the facilities as required by the county emergency management plan and program.

## Improvements to Real Property – SB 770/ HB 927

- The bill clarifies that a PACE program administrator may only offer residential financing within the jurisdiction of a county or municipality that has authorized the program by ordinance or resolution.
- The bill also expands the eligible uses of the program to include advanced wastewater treatment and flood mitigation but remove solar energy as an eligible use. Lastly, the bill tightens the consumer protections surrounding the program, including additional disclosure requirements and greater financial scrutiny on a property owner's ability to repay.

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Local Regulation of Nonconforming and Unsafe Structures – SB 1526/ HB 1647

This bill creates the Resiliency and Safe Structures Act, providing that a local government may not prohibit, restrict, or prevent the demolition of the following structures for any reason other than public safety:

- Nonconforming structures
- Structures or buildings determined to be unsafe by a local building official; and
- Structures or buildings ordered to be demolished by a local government that has proper jurisdiction
- Status: Signed into law by Governor DeSantis on March 22, 2024

## Building Regulation - SB 684/ HB 267

- The bill provides the statutory framework for the approval of building permits. While the bill shortens the existing timeframes, or “shot clocks,” for building permit review, the bill allows flexibility for local governments in requesting additional information of the applicant to ensure compliance with the building code.
- Local governments are able to establish the review procedure within this shot clock that best fits its department's needs by publishing the requirements on its website. This will lead to a better customer-service relationship between the building departments and the applicants they serve. The bill includes an additional use of carry-forward funds for technology, such as artificial intelligence, that has the potential to greatly reduce the timeframes for review to help achieve the reductions in shot clocks.

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Florida Retirement System – HB 151

The bill establishes the contribution rates paid by employers that participate in the Florida Retirement System beginning July 1, 2024. These rates are intended to fund the full normal cost and the amortization of the unfunded actuarial liability of the FRS and the impact of changes made by the bill.

- Allows FRS retirees to receive both compensation from an employer that participates in the FRS and retirement benefits, provided the retiree is not reemployed within the six months following the date of retirement.
- The 3 percent employee contribution rate is not changed by this bill
- *The Cost of Living Adjustment was NOT included in the final bill*
- Status: Signed into law by Governor DeSantis on April 15, 2024

## Special Districts - HB 7013/ SB 1058

- This bill revises regulations concerning special districts, including implementing a 12-year consecutive term limit for elected members of governing bodies in most independent special districts.
- It stipulates that only the Legislature can alter boundaries of independent special districts, except under certain circumstances and eliminates provisions allowing special districts to become municipalities without legislative approval.

## Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services -SB 1084/ HB 1071

- The bill preempts the regulation of electric vehicle charging stations to the state and prohibits local governmental entities from enacting or enforcing such regulations.

# Key Legislation - Passed

## Annual Adjustment to Homestead Exemption Value- HJR 7017

- Places a Constitutional Amendment on the general election ballot, providing for annual adjustment of the second homestead exemption for inflation by indexing it to the Consumer Price Index.
- Specifically, the value of the exemption would be updated each January 1st based on the percentage change reported by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Status: Passed, Signed by Officers and filed with the Secretary of State on March 21, 2024

## Continuing Contracts – HB 149/ SB 656

- The bill increases the maximum limit for continuing contracts covered by the CCNA from an estimated per project construction cost of \$4 million to \$7.5 million plus an annual increase based on the Consumer Price Index.



# Key Legislation - Failed

- **County Commissioner Term Limits**
- **Sovereign Immunity**
- **Local Business Tax Limitations**
- **Municipal Utility Rate Reform**
- **Tourist Development Tax Reform**
- **Electric Vehicle License Tax**
- **Doubling of the Homestead Exemption**

# What's Next?

## 2025 Session Dates:

- Committee Weeks will commence after the General Election on November 5, 2024 and will be formally announced this summer.
- Regular Session begins March 4th, 2025



Questions?

