



# THE MAYFIELD MINUTE

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Greetings from Tallahassee! At the end of the second week of session, many bills have begun to work their way through the legislative process. In this newsletter I will highlight several pieces of legislation that I feel will have a positive impact on our state. On Friday we received the estimated revenue deficits for the upcoming fiscal year. As expected, state economists noted that the state's fiscal situation has slipped and the state budget is expected to face a shortfall in excess of \$6 billion this coming year. As we work to rewrite the state's budget we will continue to focus on our top priority - revitalizing Florida's economy and helping to create jobs for Floridians.

*-Rep. Debbie Mayfield*

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Marvin Shelton, Harriet Hauser, Connie Hall, and Bob Sukolsky of the FL Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors with Rep. Mayfield



Fillberto Valero and Tony Loupe of the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County with Rep. Mayfield in her Tallahassee office

## FCAT SCIENCE BILL PROGRESS

Last Tuesday House Bill 543, or the "FCAT Science Bill," was considered in the House PreK-12 Policy Committee. This bill would replace the existing 11th grade FCAT science test with an end-of-course biology exam.

If HB 543 is passed, successful completion of a Biology I course and the new end-of-course exam would become requirements for high school graduation. A student

must earn a passing score on the end-of-course exam to receive course credit.

Much like the FCAT, student grades from the exam would be factored into the overall grades of their schools. However, unlike the FCAT, which is only proctored in the 11th grade year, the bill would allow students to take the biology course and corresponding exam during any of their four years in high school.

To simplify the implementation of these new requirements, the bill specifies a multi-phase plan, with full implementation by the 2012-2013 school year.

HB 543 was found favorable last week in the PreK-12 Policy Committee with a vote of 11-2. It is scheduled to come before the House PreK-12 Appropriations Committee for a vote on Tuesday, March 17.



Florida's Old and New Capitols

If you have any issues, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact our district secretary, Bethany Fretwell, at (772) 778-5077 or toll-free at (866) 957-7289.

For more detailed information on legislative issues, please check out the Florida Legislature's website!  
[www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov)



## REFORMING THE FL RETIREMENT SYSTEM

House Bill 479, by Representative Robert Schenck would create more stringent requirements for the DROP program within the Florida Retirement system. This bill revises the definition of "termination" by extending the prohibition on retiree reemployment with a Florida retirement system employer from one calendar month to twelve calendar months. The bill also extends the period under which a retiree reemployed by any FRS employer may not collect both salary and retirement benefits from months 2 through 12 after retirement to months 13 through 24. It removes the reemployment limitation exemptions for elected officers, firefighters, and paramedics, and eliminates reenrollment in the retirement system. This bill is expected to create a cost-savings for both the state and FRS employers. HB 479 was found favorable last week in the House Governmental Affairs Policy Committee, of which Rep. Mayfield is a member, with a unanimous vote of 12-0.



Rep. Mayfield with Penny Chandler, Cathy McKenzie, Bill Curtis, and Helene Caseltine of the IRC Chamber of Commerce



Kris Smith of the FL Optometric Association in Tallahassee with Representative Mayfield



District 80 delegates of the Catholic Women's Association in Tallahassee for Catholic Days at the Capitol

## HB 1353– THE "GO GREEN FLORIDA" BILL

This year Rep. Mayfield also introduced House Bill 1353, or the "Go Green" Bill. If passed, this bill would create a "Go Green Florida" license plate. Proceeds from the sale of this license plate would be distributed to the Coalition for Renewable Energy Solutions to create a recognition and incentives grant program. Grants will be given to recognize and incentivize green living initiatives in the State of Florida at the recommendation of Florida Energy and Climate Change Commission. The bill also designates the creation of educational programs to increase awareness of alternative energy options and green living practices and seeks to minimize Florida's carbon footprint.

## CLASS SIZE AMENDMENT UPDATE

In 2002, 52% of Florida voters approved an amendment to the Florida constitution to reduce class size. Florida students have benefitted from smaller classrooms and test scores improved. But if we're going to continue to make small class sizes a priority, we must implement a common-sense fix so our students continue to have the benefit of smaller classes while giving our principals and teachers the flexibility they need to keep Florida's education focus where it belongs: classroom learning. Rep. Weatherford's HJR 919 gives voters the opportunity to support efforts to keep class sizes small while giving school districts the flexibility they need to avoid the costs and disruptions that would be necessary to meet the impending requirements. On Tuesday, the House PreK-12 Policy Committee voted on HJR 919, finding it favorable with a vote of 10-3.