



April 17-21, 2017
2017 Legislative Session – Week 7

Senator Frank Artiles, a Republican from Miami-Dade resigned last week. This comes after extraordinary controversy of using offensive language and racial slurs in front of a few Democratic members during a late night outing in Tallahassee. Initially, Senator Artiles intended to remain in the Senate but he ultimately decided to resign, effective immediately, citing that this attention was “a distraction” to process. A special election will take place this summer to replace Senator Artiles.

The House and Senate each advanced their own version of workers' compensation reforms this week, with [HB 7085](#) passing the full House and now residing in the Senate, and [SB 1582](#) clearing all its committee stops and now awaiting action by the full Senate. But despite their close proximity in a procedural sense, the bills remain significantly different. The House bill holds the line on attorneys' fees at a \$150 an hour and rolls back reimbursements to doctors and hospitals treating injured workers. The Senate bill caps attorneys' fees at \$250 an hour and does not include the reductions in reimbursements for claimants' medical treatment. With two weeks left in the Regular Session, neither chamber has indicated a willingness to adopt the provisions in the other chamber's bill, or suggested how a compromise might be reached on a bill that both the House and Senate would be willing to vote out and send to the Governor.

The House and Senate continue to bridge the divide in their respective budget proposals. Negotiations have been ongoing but are still not resolved. The final date that lawmakers can pass a final budget is three days before the scheduled end of Session on May 5 because of the state's 72-hour “cooling off period.”

April 25th is day 50 of Session and, based on Senate Rules, is the last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings. Therefore, any bills that are going to move forward under the traditional committee-stops-to-floor-vote process will need to be out of committee this Tuesday.

FES/FICE Bills of Specific Interest

HB 789 (CCNA) was not added to the agenda of the Government Accountability Committee scheduled to meet Monday April 24. Thank you to all of our members who made phone calls and sent emails educating Legislators on the importance of CCNA this Session. Your grassroots advocacy is what makes your lobbying team in Tallahassee successful.

HB 1281 creates a procurement Task Force (TF). This TF would evaluate all state procurement laws (including CCNA). Your lobbying team in Tallahassee was successful on adding an amendment to the TF, which added a seat for one professional engineer licensed under chapter 471. All indications are that Senator Jeff Brandes will accept the same amendment on the Senate bill.

FES/FICE continues to monitor and take immediate action on multiple bills as they move through the last two weeks of Session. If you have a specific bill in question or need more information, please contact shobbs@fleng.org.