



State & Federal Legislative Priorities Update 2025

Gainesville City Commission Retreat
3/27/2025

Office of the City Manager - Government Affairs and Community Relations

John Alexander, Director

Thomas Harrington, PhD., Legislative Affairs Coordinator



State Legislative Priorities

Planning and Approach



New State Lobby Firm – Becker & Poliakoff, P.A.

- RFP for new services starting 10/1/2024 approved by Commission on 9/19/2024.
- Individual meetings with Commissioners on 10/30/2024.
- Involvement at FL League of Cities Annual Legislative Conference from 12/5/2024 – 12/6/2024.



Yolanda Cash Jackson, Esq.
Lobbying Team Leader

Planning and Approach



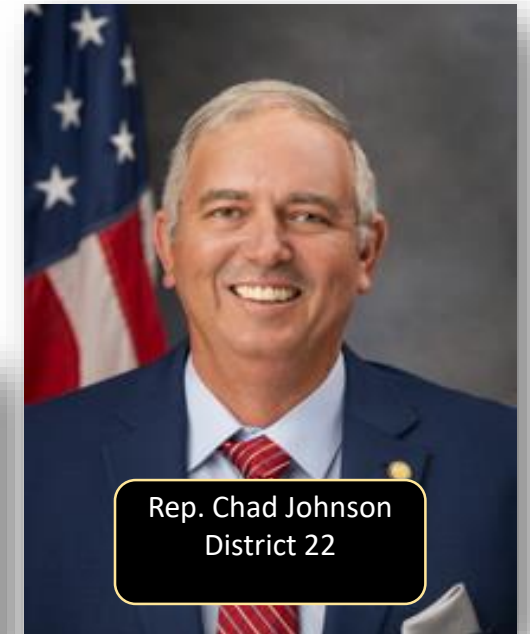
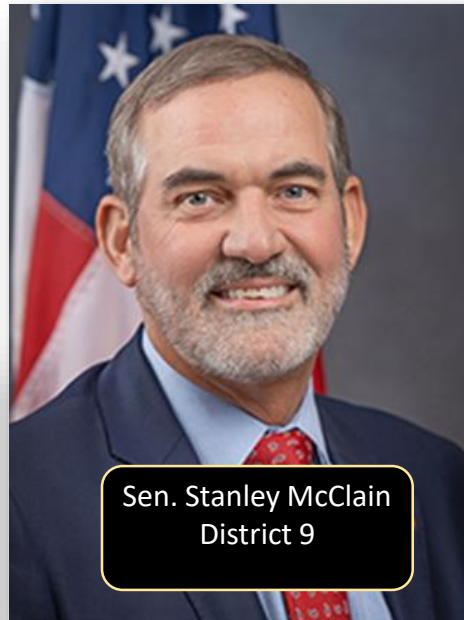
City Commission GPC Meeting – 11/14/2024

- Passage of 2025 state legislative priorities.
- This list serves as a guide to help focus on specific projects and potential bills.
- City priorities finalized prior to state legislative committee weeks starting 12/9/2024.
- Annual Alachua delegation meeting on 1/9/2025 at Santa Fe College
- Tallahassee visit by Mayor with delegation members on 1/14/2025

Planning and Approach



Annual Alachua Delegation Meeting - 1/9/2024



City of
Gainesville



Local Projects & Policy Bills

Local Projects



- **8th/Waldo – Hurricane Shelter Expansion** (\$350,000 design)
- **GTEC Roof Repair/Weatherization** (\$1,025,000 capital)
- **SW 47th Avenue – Regional Safety Corridor** (\$700,000 construction)
- **SW Public Safety Services Center** (\$1,170,500 design)
- **Law Enforcement Property/Evidence Hub** (\$985,000 design)

Transportation



HB 501 Hands-free Driving - Prohibits person from operating motor vehicle while using wireless communications device in handheld manner; requires that sustained use of wireless communications device by person operating motor vehicle be conducted through hands-free accessory until such use is terminated; revises penalty provisions relating to use of wireless communications devices in handheld manner in certain circumstances.

(Source: Florida House of Representatives)

FLC – No position

Transportation Bill Status- In Progress



Companion Bill: SB 1318

House of Representatives

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Government Operations Subcommittee | Referred |
| State Affairs | Referred |

Senate

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Transportation | Pass |
| Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development | Referred |
| Rules | Referred |

Sovereign Immunity



HB 301 Sovereign Immunity - Raises limits from \$200K/person and \$300K/incident to \$1M/person and \$3M/incident for claims accruing between 10/1/25, and 10/1/30. After 10/1/30, these limits will increase to \$1.1M and \$3.2M, respectively; prohibits insurance policy from conditioning payout of a claim on the passage of a claims bill. The legislation allows a subdivision of the state to settle a claim above statutory limits without the need for a claims bill, even if payout exceeds insurance policy limits. The bill narrows statute of limitation on negligence claims against government entities from four years to two years. and required pre-suit notice from three years to 18 months.

(Source: FLC)

FLC – Opposes

Sovereign Immunity Status -In Progress



Companion Bill: SB 1570

House of Representatives

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee | Pass |
| Budget | On 3/20 agenda at 11:30am |
| Judiciary | Referred |

Senate

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Judiciary | Referred |
| Appropriations | Referred |
| Rules | Referred |

Claims



SB 96 Relief - providing for an appropriation to compensate Jacob Rodgers for injuries sustained as a result of an incident involving a City (dba GRU) employee in 2015; after final judgment of \$11M and the statutory limit of \$200K paid, this bill would authorize appropriation from funds not otherwise encumbered to draw a warrant in the sum of \$10.8 million payable to the party as compensation for damages.

(Source: FL Senate)

FLC – Opposes

Claims – No Movement



Companion Bill: HB 6521

| Senate | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
| Special Master on Claims Bills | Referred |
| Judiciary | Referred |
| Community Affairs | Referred |
| Rules | Referred |

| House of Representatives | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
| Civil Justice & Claims Subcommittee | Referred |
| Judiciary | Referred |

Local Business Taxes



HB 503 Local Business Taxes - Seeks to limit municipal ability to apply local business taxes and has grave repercussions with noncompliance. This is approximately a \$850K revenue stream of the City and the bill will also limit the local ability to increase future business tax rates.

(Source: City Finance Department)

FLC – Opposes

Local Business Taxes Status – In Progress



Companion Bill: SB 1196

House of Representatives

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Ways & Means | Pass |
| Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee | Pass |
| State Affairs | Referred |

Senate

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Community Affairs | Referred |
| Finance & Tax | Referred |
| Appropriations | Referred |

Homestead Exemption Bills



HJR 357 Property Tax Exemptions – Proposes amendment to State Constitution (2026 ballot) to create \$100,000 exemption from assessed value of real property for all levies.

HB 359 – Implementing bill for HJR 357, establishing a new \$100,000 exemption on all property tax levies effective January 1, 2027.

(Source: Florida House of Representatives & FLC)

FLC – Opposes

City of
Gainesville

Homestead Exemption Status – No Movement



Companion Bill: None

| House of Representatives – HJR 357 | |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
| Ways & Means | Referred |
| Intergovernmental Affairs | Referred |
| State Affairs | Referred |

| House of Representatives – HB 359 | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
| Ways & Means | Referred |
| Intergovernmental Affairs | Referred |
| State Affairs | Referred |

Homestead Exemption Bills Cont'd



SJR 1016 Increased Homestead Property Exemptions –

Proposes amendment (2026 ballot) to State Constitution to increase homestead exemption from \$25K to \$75K, for all levies, with annual adjustments for inflation.

SB 1018 – The \$75K value of the additional exemption shall be adjusted annually for inflation.

(Source: Florida Senate)

FLC – Opposes

Homestead Exemption Status – No Movement



Companion Bill: None

Senate – SJR 1016

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Community Affairs | Referred |
| Finance & Tax | Referred |
| Appropriations | Referred |

Senate – SB 1018

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Community Affairs | Referred |
| Finance & Tax | Referred |
| Appropriations | Referred |

Permitting Bills



HB 695 Building Inspection Services – represents an extinction level event for regulation of building codes and local land use, placing all authority over local permitting in the hands of private entities w/o responsibility to interests of local taxpayers; completely bypasses local permitting process where coordination/cost sharing of infrastructure facilities that support development are worked through; specifically calls for local officials who are carrying out mandated duties of protecting the public to be held personally liable; immediate effect of defunding self-sustainable enterprise funded departments such as DSD that do not rely on any general tax revenue; private provider services are dramatically higher than municipal fees – this would absolutely result in driving housing costs even higher.

(Source: COG Building Official)

FLC – Opposes

Permitting Bill – No Movement



Companion Bill: SB 1474

House of Representatives

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee | Referred |
| Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee | Referred |
| Commerce | Referred |

Senate

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Community Affairs | Referred |
| Appropriations – Ag, Environment, & General Government | Referred |
| Fiscal Policy | Referred |

Permitting Bills Continued



SB 1128 Building Permits for a Single-family Dwelling – provides that a building permit issued by a local government for a single-family dwelling may not expire before the effective date of the next edition of the FL Building Code, which is updated every three years. The bill also requires the applicable local government to issue the building permit within two days after such approval; this would further erode the FL Building Code.

(Source: FL League of Cities & DSD)

FLC – Opposes

City of
Gainesville

Permitting Bill Continued – In Progress



Companion Bill: HB 1035

Senate

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Community Affairs | Pass |
| Regulated Industries | Referred |
| Rules | Referred |

House of Representatives

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee | Pass |
| Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee | Referred |
| Commerce | Referred |

Housing Bill



HB 923 Affordable Housing – new “glitch” bill; expands multi-family project eligibility, amends the opt-out for the 80-120% AMI exemption, authorizes local governments to provide the optional exemption to multifamily developments as small as five units, expands eligibility to adaptive reuse project, allows local governments to use their infrastructure surtax revenue on construction/rehab beyond current land acquisition, & creates a new corporate income tax credit for the rehabilitation of a certified historic structure into affordable or workforce housing.

FLC – Opposes

(Source: Florida Housing Coalition)

City of
Gainesville

Housing Bill Status – No Movement



Companion Bill: SB 1594

House of Representatives

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| Ways & Means | Referred |
| Housing, Ag, & Tourism | Referred |
| Commerce | Referred |

Senate

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Community Affairs | Referred |
| Finance & Tax | Referred |
| Rules | Referred |



HJR 1325 Succession to Office of Governor, Auditing, and Government Efficiency – proposes 2026 constitutional amendment to restructure state government by eliminating the Office of Lieutenant Governor and creating a new elected Commissioner of Government Efficiency as a Cabinet officer. Relevant to cities, the Commissioner of Government Efficiency would have the authority to audit, investigate, and report on fraud, waste, and abuse within the executive branch of state government, counties, municipalities, and special districts.

(Source: FL League of Cities)

FL DOGE – In Progress



Companion Bill: SJR 1756

House of Representatives

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Government Operations Subcommittee | Pass |
| State Affairs | On 3/20 agenda at 8:30am |

Senate

| Committee Name | Pass/Fail/Referred |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Governmental Oversight & Accountability | Pass |
| Appropriations | Referred |
| Rules | Referred |

Other – Mental Health & Violence



- **Expansion of Mental Health** – Sen. Bradley’s SB 168 (HB 1207) would expand grant use towards EMT training/response; moving out of first to next/last committee
- **IMPACT GNV Prevention Project** (Rep. Hinson & Sen. Rouson) – proposed \$500,000 for at-risk youth therapy, substance abuse treatment, mediation training, employment, job training, referrals to FL Department of Juvenile Justice, State Attorney, and the Public Defender's Office





Federal Legislative Priorities

Planning and Approach



Van Scoyoc & Associates

- Individual meetings with Commissioners on 2/18/2025 at beginning of new Congress and new Administration.
- Passage of 2025 federal legislative priorities on 3/6/2025, focusing on City departmental needs, federal programs, and grants.



Harry Glenn
Vice President



Will Smith
Director, Gov. Relations

List of Priorities



- Public Safety, Infrastructure, & Resiliency
- Economic Development & Reinvestment
- Transportation
- Housing
- Historic Preservation
- Other – Municipal Bonds & NIH Funding

Federal Landscape



- **Executive Orders & DOGE** – Patchwork of EO’s to freeze federal grants and reduce the federal workforce as well as lower federal court rulings w/multiple lawsuits still pending (likely Supreme Court cases to follow)
- **Federal Government Shutdown** – avoided though full year Continuing Resolution could jeopardize federal grant programs
- **Budget Reconciliation** – process seeks to cut \$1.5T and make permanent 2017 tax reform provisions, with targeted expansions; tax-free status of municipal bond financing could be a target
- **Rollbacks** – EO’s and Congressional action could roll back environmental protections that were enacted in previous administrations and Congressional sessions

New Delegation Member



- **U.S. Sen. Ashley Moody (R)**
- ***Gainesville connection:*** BS/MA Accounting & JD - UF
- ***Service:*** Former FL Attorney General, former circuit court judge
- ***Committees:*** Joint Economic; Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions; Homeland Security & Govt. Affairs; Judiciary; Special Committee on Aging
- ***First Filed Bill:*** HELPER Act – Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder to provide Federal Housing Admin. home loan assistance to police, firefighters, & other first responders



Recent Developments



- **NIH Funding** – 3/5/25 – federal judge issues nationwide injunction blocking proposed NIH funding reimbursement cap changes; Congress now seeking a compromise agreement with the Administration.
- **USDOT Guidance & SS4A** – USDOT undertaking internal project-by-project review of all awards w/o signed grant agreements and partially obligated grant agreements; scope of grants could be renegotiated to reflect new Administration priorities, or eliminated all together (EV's, charging equipment). RTS bus grants, Safe Streets 4 All implementation and planning grants, and charging infrastructure grants most at-risk.

Surplus Federal Property



- **Disposal of GSA Property** – GSA proposed the sale of the federal courthouse building in downtown Gainesville; while the list of surplus buildings was quickly withdrawn, it could resurface.
- **Job Corps Property** -- The City continues to evaluate the possibility of using a GSA public benefit conveyance to take ownership of the former Job Corps site for use as a fire emergency management and law enforcement training facility.



Proposed Federal Legislation



- **GFR Leading Nationwide Effort** – GFR has brought the attention of federal diesel emission regulations that severely compromise the operation and readiness of safety vehicles. U.S. Rep. Cammack is reviewing previous legislation that would provide an exemption to these regulations for fire and other safety apparatuses.
- **Tax Incentives** – The City also is monitoring the proposed expansion of federal tax credits for affordable housing and community development projects.



Thank You

Office of the City Manager
Government Affairs and Community Relations

John Alexander, Director

Thomas Harrington, PhD, Legislative Affairs Coordinator

