

03.01.2021

Amy Maguire, Principal | amaguire@shumakeradvisors.com | 727.656.8413
John David "JD" White, Senior Advisor | jwhite@shumakeradvisors.com | 813.229.7600
Jordyn Ferguson, Intern | jferguson@shumakeradvisors.com



The 2021 Legislative Session is set to begin on Tuesday, March 2nd and run for 60 days, ending on April 30th. Following a year of uncertainty, the legislature faces pressing issues related to COVID-19 and its effects on the state, as well as legislative efforts surrounding education, the environment, taxes, and more.

Lawmakers will be tasked with preparing the budget, following Governor DeSantis's proposed \$96.6 billion total for fiscal year 2021-2022. The state is working with an overall deficit of \$2.75 billion, and will likely be forced to make difficult cuts across the board.

In terms of education, the question of students who have "gone missing" from school districts remains, and brings about questions of budgeting for the upcoming school year and whether districts could face cuts for missing students. Additionally, the legislature faces a looming Republican-backed school choice voucher bill that would expand access to private schools, raising concerns from proponents of public schooling.

DeSantis's proposed Florida Leads budget is generous toward the environment, requesting \$1 billion over four years to Resilient Florida to combat climate change and other environmental issues, and \$625 million to everglades and springs restoration. The legislature will have to decide whether to honor that, while also facing a bill regarding regulation of Key West's seaport, which has already raised questions of preemption.

Two separate bills up for discussion aim to prevent liabilities on businesses related to COVID-19, one for businesses and one for health care providers. These bills raise questions surrounding nursing homes, which have seen thousands of deaths throughout the pandemic. The legislation is a priority for Speaker Sprowls, in addition to a bill aiming to prevent consumer fraud in relation to COVID-19 vaccines.

State legislators are also toying with major legislation surrounding election practices, the repeal of Florida's No-Fault law, violence in protests, public employee union dues, and more. Although this year's legislative session will look different than any we have seen before, with the Capitol closed to the public and testimony being heard from the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center, important lawmaking will still be done and vital decisions will still be made in Tallahassee beginning on Tuesday.

Please contact Amy Maguire at amaguire@shumakeradvisors.com or JD White at jwhite@shumakeradvisors.com if there are specific issues you or a client is interested in.

To receive the latest legal and legislative information straight to your inbox, subscribe [here](#).

shumaker.com

