

## FRA Legislative meeting summary for 04/02/2026

The Florida Renal Association's (FRA) Legislative Committee met for the third time in 2026 on Friday April 2nd. This is the first post 2026 session legislative meeting and for the second straight year, session ended without passing the constitutionally required balanced state budget. Mr. Watson led the discussion after Vice-President Codie Pauley started the meeting.

### News and Notes:

- We began with an acknowledgement of our troops and the recent war with Iran.
- Mr. Watson wished everyone a happy April Fool's Day, Passover and Easter weekend!
- Artemis II launch was incredible, and we could see it in Tallahassee, I was 5 years old the last time we went to the moon.
- **RFK Jr** was recently in a South Florida hospital talking about **Food in Hospitals** which directly dovetails with our FRA Food is Medicine legislative focus. He was joined by Arg. Sec Simpson and not Gov DeSantis, which was politically notable.
- **Special election surprises.** In recently concluded special elections, two seats switched from R to D. The open Tampa area Senate seat of Jay Collins, who was appointed Lt Gov, was won by D Brian Nathan, who defeated former House HHS Chair Josie Tomkow! Additionally, the open seat of Rep. Caruso R was won by D Emily Gregory, which is notable because that district is in Palm Beach and includes President Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate. Democrats are hoping this is a foreshadowing of the upcoming mid-term elections.

**No state budget, AGAIN!!** The 2026 session ended appropriately enough on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> with a thud. For the second year in a row, there is no budget for Florida after July 1st. Last year the disagreements and anger boiled over into a 45-day extended session. This year they called it quits and did sine die or officially ended the 2026 session. This means they will have to come back in a special session for a budget before July 1<sup>st</sup> or we could see a Florida government shutdown! Most major issues died again as the House had many disagreements with both the Senate and Governor.

Governor DeSantis, back in January, already called a **special session** for April 20<sup>th</sup> for a mid-decade **redrawing of Congressional districts**. Presently, Florida has a 20-8 R/D split, and rumor has it he may try for a 24-4 split, which is designed to help keep the Federal House in R control. This is controversial to say the least and even many Rs are saying don't do it, as it may weaken presently safe R districts.

Additionally, another **special session on property tax relief** is still possible. So, it is very unclear if they will combine issues into one special, two or possibly have three separate special sessions by summer!

**2026 Session summary.** The House certainly displayed a more independent streak by standing up to the Governors and Senates agenda on many topics. This led to the fewest bills becoming law in the DeSantis administrations eight years. However, there was a late run of some "red meat" issues **that did pass** including *an elections ID bill, a DEI restrictions bill, a union busting bill, a school safety bill allowing professors to be armed, a net-zero ban bill, and a domestic terrorist bill.* Other big bills that passed included a huge *Agriculture bill, an education package that was heavily amended and a sovereign immunity bill* which raises the limits from \$200/300 to \$350/500 before a claims bill is required.

Many of the **larger issues died** including the AI Bill of Rights, the Rural Renaissance bill, Property Tax relief, Property Insurance relief, Growth Management, gun liability and age limits and E-Verify for all

businesses. There was a huge House healthcare bill that we got the FRA supported Social Workers licensure compact amended into that also died. The Senate never addressed it. The good news of things dying included defeating the work requirements for Medicaid recipients bill and the “medical freedom” bill which creates a new “conscientious” objection for vaccine requirements and other things. The FRA strongly opposed those two issues, and we thank the House for its leadership on defeating them.

There were some healthcare bills that passed including a \$31 million restoration of funds for ADAP or AIDS drugs, a pediatric ER bill, a veteran’s dental bill, areas of critical need bill, a drowning prevention bill, a sickle cell bill and a few others. Unfortunately, most of the below FRA priorities also died, but we were able to help shape the discussion. But the good news is that Kidney Day has a lasting impact on the hearts and minds of legislators. We thank all those that sponsored and participated!

### **The 2026 FRA legislative agenda update:**

- **Social workers licensure compact** (HB 13 / SB 74) – we passed HB 13 off the House floor 113-0, but it was never heard in the Senate. We also amended the language into the big House healthcare bill, HB 697 to pass it on another vehicle.
- **Living organ donor time off bill** (HB 493 / SB 390) – we passed HB 493 off the House floor 112-0, but it was never heard in the Senate. We watched the below 10-minute video on the House floor debate. It starts at 4:20:17 and goes until 4:30:37, in addition to sponsor Rep. Kim Berfield, Rep.s Tant, Harris, Bartleman and LaMarca all spoke. Additionally, we have 32 co-sponsors!!! (CO-SPONSORS) Abbott; Barnaby; Bartleman; Basabe; Blanco; Chaney; Cobb; Conerly; Cross; Daniels; Franklin; Gentry; Gonzalez Pittman; Griffiths; Grow; Harris; Hodgers; LaMarca; López, J.; Mooney; Partington; Rizo; Rosenwald; Salzman; Sapp; Shoaf; Snyder; Stark; Steele; Tant; Valdés; Weinberger

<https://www.flhouse.gov/VideoPlayer.aspx?eventID=11201>

- **Oppose ending vaccine mandates** (HB 917 and SB 1756) – As mentioned above, the SB is about to pass off the Senate floor today, but it does NOT include removal of any mandates. It does however make it much easier to opt out. The HB was never heard but that also included a requirement that healthcare practitioners could not refuse to treat unvaccinated patients.
- **Food is medicine** (HB 1315 / SB 1470) – Unfortunately, neither bill was heard this session, but we did speak a lot about the importance or proper nutrition for our patient population.

**May 12<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am** - The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and the Florida Renal Association (FRA) have scheduled another webinar for the Florida Medicaid managed care plans that focuses on home modalities. Our very own VP Codie Pauley has led this webinar for several years now where we educate the plans on both the cost savings and potential better outcomes for dialysis patients. This webinar is required in proviso language of the state budget, and we support the on-going inclusion each year.

Finally, the next session begins on March 2, 2027. We will be looking at March 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and/or the 23<sup>rd</sup> as the next Kidney Day in Tallahassee. We are actively asking for input to help shape the agenda and the FRA legislative priorities moving forward. Thank you for your membership!!