FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
All About Florida

67 Counties. 67 Communities.

ONE FLORIDA

2026 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

December 2-4

Sawgrass Marriott

Ponte Vedra Florida

St. Johns County





HEALTH, SAFETY, & JUSTICE

Health, Safety, & Justice Committee



CHAIR

Alonzetta Simpkins

Gadsden County



VICE-CHAIR

Joseph Earman

Indian River County

ROLL CALL



67 Counties. 67 Communities.

COMCAST

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Reminder

Only members of the committee can make motions and vote.

However, all commissioners and staff can make comments, ask questions, and debate during the discussion of each action item.

The Charge to Review and Restructure FAC's Guiding Principles

PRESIDENT FLOWERS' DIRECTIVE TO THE SELECT COMMITTEE

A full review, front to back

The first comprehensive review and restructuring of the Guiding Principles in many years, announced by President Flowers at the June Annual Conference.

Commissioners leading the work

A Select Committee of county commissioners and staff from across the state, formally appointed by the President.

WHAT GUIDING PRINCIPLES ARE

Enduring policy, not session positions

The long-term foundation that holds while individual positions evolve year to year.

The lens for advocacy

FAC uses to evaluate legislation and communicate county priorities.

HSJ 01 – Micromobility Devices (E-Bikes)

Submitted by Pinellas County

Proposal

FAC supports the reintroduction of SB 382 (2026), Micromobility Devices, to strengthen speed and yielding requirements for electric bicycles operating on sidewalks and shared pathways, require law enforcement agencies to track and report crashes involving micromobility devices, and create a statewide task force to recommend further improvements to micromobility device regulations.

Key Points

- No statewide minimum age exists today; since 2025, local governments may set minimum ages, require photo ID and offer safety training.
- A bill would need to define how speed is measured, penalties and age verification, and whether the state age is a floor or replaces local rules.

Staff Notes:

- CS/SB 382 (2026), Micromobility Devices, passed 37-0 and 112-0 but was vetoed June 25, 2026; it had no age provision.
- Staff will work with bill sponsor to incorporate establishing a statewide minimum age of 15 to operate an e-bike
- Pinellas BoCC supports

HSJ 02 – Reclassification of Move Over Law Penalties

Submitted by Hendry County

Proposal

Amend s. 316.126, F.S., to increase Move Over penalties, require jail time for fatal violations with aggravating circumstances, and fund FDOT public awareness.

Key Points

- Today a violation is a noncriminal moving infraction ($30 base fine); one causing death carries a $1,000 penalty and six-month license suspension.
- Jail time requires a new criminal offense; a misdemeanor caps at 1 year, which limits any mandatory minimum.
- Move Over Awareness Week (week of April 14) is already in law as of July 1, 2026; FDOT funding is the remaining awareness request.

Staff Notes:

- Honors tow operator Ken Sposato, killed April 14, 2025, in Highlands County.
- Revised from 2025 HSJ-1: felony classifications removed.
- Hendry BoCC approval pending

HSJ 03 – Medicaid Coverage for Inmate Medical Care

Submitted by Orange County

Proposal

Support aligning state law with federal law, ensuring that Medicaid-eligible inmates who are admitted to a qualifying medical facility for an inpatient stay of 24 hours or more can receive Medicaid coverage for eligible hospitalization costs.

Key Points

- Directs AHCA to amend its rule and seek federal approval; DCF would process applications for eligible inmates not enrolled at booking.
- Florida has not expanded Medicaid, so only some inmates would qualify.

Staff Notes:

- Recurring FAC priority: similar positions in 2021, 2023, 2024 and 2025.
- Legislature may see this as a county-to-state cost shift.
- Orange BoCC supports

HSJ 04 – Sustainable Reimbursement for EMS

Submitted by Union County

Proposal

Set Medicaid ground ambulance pay at no less than Medicare rates (incl. loaded mileage), pay for treatment without transport, and set a commercial insurance standard.

Key Points

- Medicaid pays $152.73 (BLS) to $371.20 (ALS2) per emergency transport with no ground mileage; Union reports $1,100 cost vs. $183 avg. Medicaid payment.
- Treatment without transport is not a separately paid Medicaid benefit in Florida
- Commercial standard adds balance-billing protections; ground ambulances fall outside the federal No Surprises Act, and state law cannot reach self-funded ERISA plans.

Staff Notes:

- Commercial bills died in 2025 (HB 425/SB 704) and 2026 (SB 1086/HB 1185).
- Union BoCC supports

HSJ 05 – Hands-Free Driving

Submitted by Collier County

Proposal

Support 2027 legislation amending s. 316.305, F.S., to prohibit handheld wireless device use while driving statewide.

Key Points

- Florida bans texting while driving statewide but restricts handheld use only in school zones, school crossings and active work zones.
- 33 states and D.C. have general handheld bans; FLHSMV's 2023 data list 8,775 device-distraction injury entries, including 16 fatal.
- A bill must define handheld use and exceptions and set fines, points and course options; the proposal specifies none yet.

Staff Notes:

- Same policy as FAC's 2026 Legislative Action Plan.
- CS/SB 1318 passed the Senate 29-7 in 2025 but died in House messages; 2026 bills also died.
- Collier BoCC supports

HSJ 06 – Animal Housing in Self-Storage

Submitted by Flagler County

Proposal

Create “Ava and Karma’s Law” prohibiting housing or confining live animals in self-storage facilities and units, with exceptions for brief visits, transport and emergencies.

Key Points

- No statewide rule bars keeping animals in storage units; current cruelty and confinement laws require proof of neglect.
- The ban would turn on use of the space, not proof of harm; likely placed in ch. 83, part III, with penalties in ch. 828, F.S.
- A bill must choose civil or criminal penalties and an enforcer; the “other legitimate purposes” exception could allow routine boarding.

Staff Notes:

- Named for two Labradors found dead in a Bunnell storage unit; a person was arrested for aggravated cruelty.
- Not intended to cover garages, barns, kennels, vet offices or farms.
- Flagler BoCC supports

HSJ 07 – Sexual Offender/Predator Address Verification

Submitted by Flagler County

Proposal

Require reasonable verification that a registered sexual offender or predator may lawfully reside at a private address before it is accepted, plus an expedited owner dispute process.

Key Points

- Registrants report where they live and agencies verify addresses, but no law requires checking owner permission or gives owners a dispute process.
- Arose in 2026 when three registrants camping behind a western Flagler store listed its address without the owner's knowledge.
- Transient reporting must continue while a dispute is reviewed, consistent with federal standards; a bill must define acceptable proof.

Staff Notes:

- Potential unfunded mandate: new verification and dispute duties may fall on sheriffs.
- Federal suit pending (Fla. Action Committee v. Glass) names 33 counties, incl. Flagler.
- Flagler BoCC supports

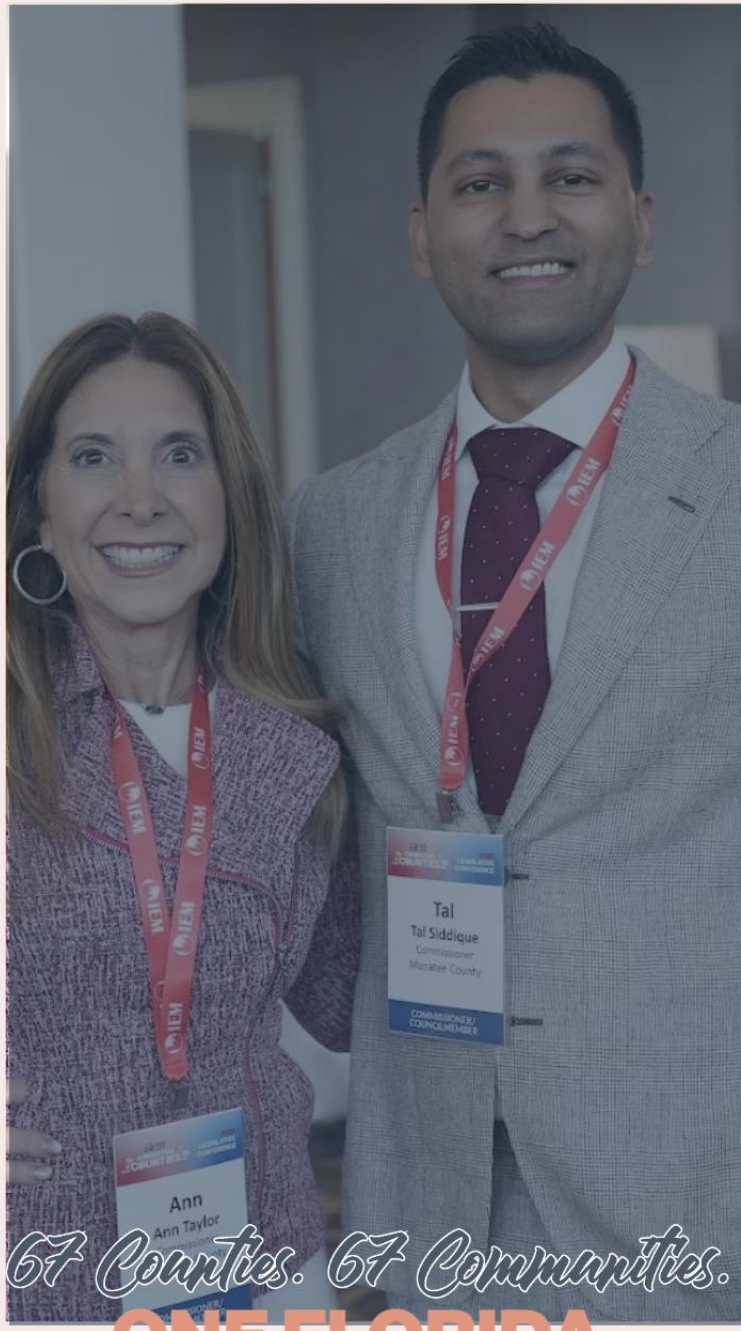
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

FAC WELCOME RECEPTION

5:30 - 6:30 PM

Lagoon Pool / Gator Club

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2ND

Committee Meeting:

AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS

3:00 - 4:30 PM

Champions D-E

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