



March 27, 2015



*Mark Wilson, President and CEO
Florida Chamber of Commerce*

more confident about the [more than 800,000](#) private-sector jobs created since Governor Scott was elected than the direction the federal government is headed.

As Florida's 2015 legislative session continues into its fourth week of sixty days, a total of [1,677 bills have been filed](#) so far- 843 in the Senate and 834 in the House. Six bills have passed both chambers. As we begin to focus on the second half of the legislative session, it's important to remember that Florida has come a long way- and according to the [Florida Chamber Political Institute's most recent poll](#), Florida voters are increasingly

I know how busy you are so I've put together a brief update on a few of the 30 Florida Chamber competitiveness priorities of this session. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions on a specific bill or issue, please contact me directly at mwilson@fchamber.com or 850-521-1209.

Targeted Tax Reforms

Did you know that Florida has the [fourth highest cellphone tax for businesses and employees in the nation](#)? Or that we are the only state to charge a sales tax on [commercial leases](#)? At the Florida Chamber, we are continuing to advocate for [targeted tax reforms](#) on communication services and commercial leases, which will help keep the cost of doing business competitive, will benefit our economy and will help families and small businesses succeed. We will continue to fight for Floridians to keep more of their money, so they can invest in their employees, their families and their savings. As Senator Tom Lee, Senate Appropriations Chair, said on a [recent edition of the Florida Chamber's Bottom Line](#) , "Aren't we

fortunate to be in a state where we are talking about cutting taxes in the context of the national government, that's talking about raising them?" While the federal government's decision to temporarily suspend billions of dollars in low income pool funding is impacting the taxes cut, we continue to push for [smarter healthcare solutions](#) and targeted tax cuts.

Securing Florida's Water Future

The first bill passed out of the Florida House of Representative's was the Florida Chamber-backed comprehensive water bill. Despite being surrounded on three sides by water, Florida will need 28 percent more water by 2030 to meet our growing population. The Florida Chamber encourages you to [share this water video](#) and help secure Florida's water future. At the Florida Chamber, we are working to make sure the implementation of Amendment 1 and the allocation of funds [keeps important programs like affordable housing, transportation and education intact](#). House Speaker Steve Crisafulli should be commended for championing game changing water solutions in the Florida house.

Pension Reform

Each year, Florida taxpayers- after paying the pension payment for state government employees- pay an extra \$500 million to bail out the unfunded pension liability. While a recent study has temporarily halted state public employee pension reform, the Florida Chamber will continue to [advocate](#) for common sense reform that keeps the economy Floridians have worked hard to rebuild moving in the right direction and maintains our bond rating.

Las Vegas-Style Gambling Expansion is a Bad Bet for Florida's Future

This week, I personally presented the [Florida Chamber perspective](#) on the impacts of expanded gambling. Florida's family-friendly brand is one that should be protected. Learn more about why newspapers are agreeing with the Florida Chamber that [expanded gambling is a bad bet for Florida](#).

Florida's Future Workforce

Several of Florida's education initiatives, from improved assessments to protecting school choice, are also being discussed at the Capitol. Our partnerships with organizations like the Foundation for Florida's Future and members like Charter Schools USA are essential when advocating on behalf of Florida's students, parents, teachers and employees. In fact, I hope you will join me on April 13 for the [Children's Week Business Luncheon](#), which will focus on the importance of the Florida Chamber Foundation's early learning initiatives. Click here to read our most recent editorial, published in newspapers across Florida, [Increasing Education and Employment Options for People with Unique Abilities](#).

Smarter Healthcare for Florida

Healthcare is complicated, confusing and getting more expensive. The Florida Chamber believes that Florida can be part of [the cure](#). The Florida Legislature is debating bills to bend the cost curve and possibly expand coverage, from [scope of practice](#) to [embracing innovation](#). Please [watch and share this video](#) and help pass smarter healthcare reform that works for Florida. Did you know, Medicaid

consumes 29 percent of Florida's \$77 billion budget and that your premiums are eight percent higher so you can cover those without coverage? While I believe the federal government will find a way to fund the low income pool, we'll keep pushing our [smarter healthcare coverage bill](#).

Marketing Florida's Improving Business Climate

California, a state that has ranked as one of the worst business climates in the nation for the past 11 years, spends \$50 million per year on out-of-state marketing and New York, home to the most expensive city in the nation, is in the middle of a \$200 million ad campaign that promotes New York's business climate as a place to start and grow businesses. Florida, with an improving business climate, spends \$0 marketing our business climate out of state. We can't afford to have Florida be America's "best kept secret"- but we need your help to change that. [Click here](#) and join the effort to invest \$20 million annually to Market Florida.

International Relationships Matter to Florida

Did you know international business and foreign direct investment accounts for approximately 17 percent of Florida's economic activity, and directly supports more than 1 million Florida jobs? In Florida, [global trade means high-wage jobs and economic prosperity](#). Economic development and trade missions with partners like Enterprise Florida are one way to build Florida's global economy. In fact, the Florida Chamber's Director of Global Outreach, Alice Ancona, recently returned from an [economic development mission to Peru](#) with Secretary of Commerce Bill Johnson, Enterprise Florida and Lieutenant Governor Carlos Lopez-Cantera, where a [Memorandum of Understanding was signed](#).

Insurance and Legal Climate Update

Thanks to the outreach of Florida Chamber members and volunteers, several lawsuit abuse reforms passed their committees in the legislature. Also, for the third week in a row, Florida Chamber members helped stop a trial-lawyer friendly bill from advancing. [Click here](#) to learn about each bill and to thank your legislators.

This week, the Florida Chamber Foundation gathered industry and policy leaders from around Florida to meet with members of the Florida Legislature to discuss the [Blueprint for Florida's Innovation & Entrepreneurial Economy](#), a research initiative designed to implement Florida's next roadmap for state-level policy and investments.

I hope to see you in Tallahassee in the coming weeks and look forward to hearing from you on how the Florida Chamber advocacy impacts jobs and competitiveness at your company.

My best,



P.S. Join the Florida Chamber and Florida's international business community for the [Florida Chamber's 2015 International Days event](#), held April 7-9 in Tallahassee. Top international trade and industry experts will discuss how we can work together to implement recommendations found in the Florida Chamber Foundation's Trade & Logistics Study 2.0 to make Florida the number one hub for global trade.

Good News from Florida Chamber Members

Florida Chamber members are making it happen in Florida. You are hiring, innovating and making Florida more competitive- we are honored to share your news. The facts are clear; Florida is headed in the right direction because of you. Share your company news with us and let us know how the Florida Chamber can help you.

FORTUNE
100
BEST
COMPANIES
TO WORK FOR
2015

Congratulations to the following companies for being named [Fortune Magazine's 100 Best Places to Work](#):

Genentech
Baptist Health South Florida
USAA
JM Family Enterprises
Navy Federal Credit Union
Mayo Clinic
Publix Super Markets
Deloitte
Ultimate Software
Kimley-Horn and Associates
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Aflac



We commend **Mazda USA** for their R.A.C.E. program, which helps students see the importance and the real world applications of careers in STEM. Read about our recent trip to a local high school with the **Greater Tampa Chamber** and Mazda USA [here](#).



Congrats to **Dr. Ed Moore, President and CEO of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF)**, for being appointed to the **CareerSource Florida** board by the Governor. We look forward to continuing to work with you on securing Florida's talent and workforce

future.



Congratulations to **ADT Corporation** for receiving a Champions of Service Award from Governor Rick Scott and Volunteer Florida. ADT was chosen for embracing "corporate philanthropy, empowering employees to identify the most significant unmet needs in their communities and taking action to solve pressing challenges." Read the [full story here](#).

ALL ABOARD FLORIDA

Florida East Coast Railways and **All Aboard Florida** recently teamed up to write *Two Companies, Moving Florida Forward Together*. We commend these companies for the work they are doing to help Florida remain competitive, innovative and move forward. Read the [full article here](#).



COMANCO recently teamed up with **MOSAIC** to tour the AGRU America production facility located in Georgetown, SC. The trip involved learning about AGRU's geonet and geocomposite products, which are used for the toughest environmental, civil and industrial applications.

Thank you!

We commend both **COMANCO** and **MOSAIC** for their commitment to learning new innovations that will keep Florida competitive.



CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AWARDS
2015 Excellence in GHG Management (Goal Achievement) Award Winner

Congratulations to **SC Johnson**, for recently receiving the 2015 Climate Leadership Award (CLA) for Excellence in Greenhouse Gas Management. The national awards program recognizes and incentivizes exemplary corporate, organizational, and individual leadership in response to climate change. Thank you for your commitment to Florida's environment. Read the [full story here](#).



SANTA FE COLLEGE



INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE

Congratulations to **Santa Fe College** for winning the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence and being recognized as one of the nations top colleges! Congratulations are also in order for **Indian River State College**- one of only 10 finalists for this year's prize. We are proud to work with members who bring opportunity for Florida's students and businesses.



**COMPETITIVENESS
AND PROSPERITY**
IN THE 21ST CENTURY WILL BE BASED ON
**TECHNOLOGY,
KNOWLEDGE AND
INNOVATION.**

FLORIDA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Florida Polytechnic and SPARXOO recently released "Future Proof," a report with interviews from leaders across Florida detailing the importance of STEM. Interviews include **MOSAIC**, the Florida Chamber Foundation, **Florida Hospital** and Google, as well as student interviews and stats on STEM in Florida. Check out the [full report here](#).

Did you know March is Red Cross Month? Every three hours the American Red Cross responds to a disaster somewhere in Florida. Florida Chamber members **Publix Super Markets** and **Duke Energy** have joined the American Red Cross in support of Fire Safety and Disaster Preparedness. In Florida, disaster preparedness is a crucial part of life. We commend companies like **Appriver**, who offer disaster preparedness efforts for business continuity, and Publix and Duke for their commitment to safety. Visit www.redcross.org/prepareflorida for more information.

We welcome the newest Florida Chamber Board of Governor members:

Broward Health
Florida Apartment Association
Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Co, LLC

We look forward to working with you to make Florida more competitive. For more information on how to get involved with the Florida Chamber, contact Emily Martin at emartin@flchamber.com.

We want to hear about your good news!

If you have important news you believe other chamber members should know about, please share it with the Florida Chamber's Communications office. Simply email Kat at kbustamante@flchamber.com or add us to your distribution list so we can share your news.