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**April 1, 2025**

**SPECIAL EDITION IV**

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**2025 Florida Legislative Session Update - Week 4**



With week four of the nine-week Session now concluded, this week begins the halfway point of the 2025 Florida Legislative Session.

Thank you to all of our members, partners and elected officials who joined us last week for **Florida Tourism Day in Tallahassee**. **With more than 25 representatives from Central Florida**, our CFHLA members and industry partners had the opportunity to advocate for our priorities, educate policymakers on the issues that can directly impact your businesses, and share the incredible value of tourism to Florida's economy, our team members and its residents.



Thank you again for the partnership with so many other industry leaders and professionals from across the state including the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, Destinations Florida, and the Florida Attractions Association.

In the end, it was an extremely productive advocacy trip on behalf of the hospitality and tourism industry, and we appreciate each of the legislators for taking the time to meet with our industry and listen to our concerns.

Check out the [video recap](#) below at the 2:11 mark to see our Central Florida delegation in action!



With the start of week five, **bills that have not been scheduled on an agenda for the first time by the end of this week, will likely not be heard this session** with subcommittees ending their work next week.

With only 31 days left, CFHLA and our leadership team will continue to educate and advocate for the desired outcome of our ten **2025 CFHLA Legislative Priorities**. Below is an update on each of the issues that are extremely important to the hospitality and tourism industry at both the state and local level.



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## Tourist Development Tax (TDT)

CFHLA is in strong opposition to several bills that would either **add a new or expanded use for Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues** or **require the periodic readoption of the TDT through local voter referendum**.

**A significant bill related to the future collection of Tourist Development Taxes has now moved through its first committees in both the House and the Senate, [HB 1221 - Local Option Taxes by Representative Monique Miller](#) and [SB 1664 by Senator Jay Trumbull](#).**

If passed, **HB 1221/SB 1664** would:

- Require all counties to pass a referendum to renew any existing TDTs by 2033.
- Mandate a new voter referendum every eight years for continued use of TDTs, but allows for a 30-year renewal if the funds collected are used to pay down bonds or other debts.
- This would pull dedicated funds away from tourism marketing and the long-term impact could result in a significant reduction in tourism to our destination. The TDT's were established to ensure counties had a dedicated funding source (not paid by residents, but rather paid by visitors) for the tourism promotion efforts necessary to create jobs and generate local revenue for our local communities and small businesses including restaurants, retail, and more.
- Exempt any TDTs that are bonded from these sunset provisions.

**[HB 1221](#) by Representative Miller – No action was taken in the House last week.** This bill is now in the House Intergovernmental Affairs Committee and this is the second of three committee stops.

**[HB 1664](#) by Senator Trumbull – The bill was approved by a vote of 5 - 3 during the Senate Community Affairs Committee meeting last Tuesday, March 25, 2025.** This bill is now in the Senate Finance Tax Committee and this is the second of three committee stops.

Additionally, **CFHLA strongly opposes adding any additional approved used for Tourist Development Tax (TDT) revenues.** Adding additional approved uses will only serve to dilute the effectiveness of these dollars, which are statutorily established for the promotion of marketing of tourism. This includes our opposition to the following bills:

**[HB 6031](#) by Representative Eskamani – No action was taken in the House last week.**

**SB 1114** by Senator Guillermo Smith – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.**

**SB 1116** by Senator Guillermo Smith – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.**

## **CFHLA OPPOSES**

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### **Visit Florida Funding**

CFHLA supports the Governor's proposed budget, which includes **\$80 million in annual funding for VISIT FLORIDA (same from FY 2024-2025)**. Funding of VISIT FLORIDA ensures Florida continues to be top of mind as a leading vacation destination.

This week, the Florida Senate and Florida House budget proposals **included the full \$80 million in annual funding for VISIT FLORIDA (same from FY 2024-2025)**. This is great news as we remain steadfast in our support of Visit Florida and its full and continued funding.

## **CFHLA SUPPORTS**



### **Clarifying Transient Occupancy (No Pay, No Stay)**

CFHLA supports making the necessary changes to Florida Statutes, to **provide more clarity to guests, law enforcement, and lodging establishments regarding the removal of disruptive, violent, law-breaking, and non-paying guests from their property.**

**However, the amended bill now includes language which:**

- Prohibits public food service establishments from including automatic gratuity or service charges in the price of food or beverages for parties of less than six (6) guests.
- The amended bill defines “gratuity” and “service charge” as any type of charge or required payment other than the price of the food or beverages.
- Public food service establishments may include automatic gratuity or service charges in the price of food or beverages for parties of six (6) or more guests. However, a public food service establishment that includes an automatic gratuity or service charge, must provide notice of the automatic charge on the face of every item provided to a guest and receipt required to be signed by a guest, in addition to being on the food menu which is required by current law. The notice must list the person or business entity receiving the gratuity or service charge and the percentage they are receiving.
- A public food service establishment may not require a guest to pay an automatic gratuity or service charge if the guest requests not to pay such gratuity or service charge.
- The amended bill also provides that if a public food establishment bases an automatic or suggested gratuity or service charge on the price of food or beverages, the gratuity or service charge must be based on the price of the food or beverages before taxes.

**HB 535** by Representative Johnson – **No action was taken in the House last week.** The bill was approved by a vote of 14 - 3 during the House Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee on March 12, 2025. **This bill was also placed on the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee agenda for today, Tuesday, April 1, 2025.**

**SB 606** by Senator Leek – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.** The bill was approved by a vote of 8 - 0 during the Senate Regulated Industries Committee on March 12, 2025. **This bill was also placed on the Senate Criminal Justice Committee agenda for today, Tuesday, April 1, 2025.**

**CFHLA SUPPORTS WITHOUT THE SERVICE CHARGE LANGUAGE INCLUDED**

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## Increased Funding for Transportation and Infrastructure Projects

CFHLA supports the **increased funding of essential transportation and infrastructure projects** across the Central Florida region (excluding using TDT funds).

Within the Governor's proposed budget, includes **\$13.8 billion for the Florida Department of Transportation Work Program**, which is used for the construction and maintenance of Florida's roads, bridges, rails, seaports and other public transportation systems that grow the state's economy and improve the quality of life for our citizens. This includes "The Moving Florida Forward Plan" which is designed to accelerate the development and completion of important transportation infrastructure projects, including the plan to resurface 80 lane miles and add 54 lanes in Fiscal Year 2025-26.

This week, the Florida Senate and Florida House budget proposals **included \$12.98 billion and \$13.99 billion respectively, for the Florida Department of Transportation Work Program.**

## CFHLA SUPPORTS

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## Additional Education Funding for Hospitality/Culinary Programs at our Local Schools, Colleges, and Universities

CFHLA supports **additional funding for our hospitality and culinary programs at our local high schools, as well as the increased per-**



**student funding at Valencia College, Seminole State College, and the University of Central Florida.**

Currently, Valencia College and Seminole State College are **among the lowest per student funding institutions in the state**. This is why it is imperative that CFHLA supports the **Florida College System Council of Presidents allocation request of \$200 million (using their formula)** in new, recurring funds to help recruit and retain the best faculty and invest in rapid credentialing workforce development programs that increase capacity within our region (including new and existing advanced accelerated programs).

**This also includes our support of the following proposed bill that would create a new funding formula for the state college system and establishes a floor of funding per student in Florida.**

**This week, the Florida Senate budget proposal included \$100 million of the \$200 million allocation request from the Florida College System Council of Presidents and the House budget proposal included \$40 million.**

**[HB 1307](#) by Representative Temple – No action was taken in the House last week.**

## **CFHLA SUPPORTS**

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### **Workforce Housing**

**CFHLA supports the continued full funding for the Sadowski Fund**, as the Central Florida community has a dire need for more reliable and affordable housing options. CFHLA remains steadfast in our support of fully funding our much needed workforce housing programs, along with seeking **modifications to the Live Local Act**.

CFHLA supports the Governor's proposed budget, **which fully funds**

**affordable and workforce housing programs at \$506.2 million.** This includes \$227.7 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program and \$178.5 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP), and \$100 million for the fourth year of the Hometown Heroes Housing Program, which helps make homeownership more affordable for eligible frontline community workers and other Florida families.

This week, **the Florida Senate proposed budget includes a total funding of \$403.8 million for affordable and workforce housing programs.** Specifically, \$71.2 million for the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program, \$182.6 million for the State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP), and \$150 million for the fourth year of the Hometown Heroes Housing Program.

**In the Florida House, the proposed budget included \$285 million in total funding for affordable and workforce housing programs.** This includes the State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL) Program, State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP), and the Hometown Heroes Housing Program.

**HB 247** by Representative Conerly – **No action was taken in the House last week.** The bill was approved by a vote of 15 - 2 during the House Housing, Agriculture & Tourism Subcommittee on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. This bill is now in the House Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee, and this is the second of three Committee stops.

**SB 184** by Senator Gaetz – The bill was approved by a vote of 15 - 0 during the Senate Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism and Economic Development on Monday, March 10, 2025. **This bill is now in the Senate Rules Committee and was added to the Committee agenda for today, Tuesday, April 1, 2025.**

**HB 923** by Representative Lopez – **No action was taken in the House last week.**

**SB 1594** by Senator McClain – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.** This bill was added to the Senate Community Affairs Committee

agenda for Tuesday, March 25, 2025. However, the bill was not considered during the committee meeting.

**HB 685** by Representative Alvarez – **No action was taken in the House last week.**

**SB 1036** by Senator Rodriguez – **No action was taken in the Senate last week.**

## CFHLA SUPPORTS

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### Commercial Property Insurance Reform

CFHLA supports any legislative efforts that are aimed at **reducing the cost of commercial insurance in Florida.**

## CFHLA SUPPORTS

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### Statewide Regulation of Vacation Rentals and Advertising Platforms

CFHLA strongly supports requiring initiatives that ensure **vacation home rentals on advertising platforms also practice the same safety standards as traditional lodging to protect visitors and their experience.**

## CFHLA SUPPORTS

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### Timeshare Revisions

CFHLA supports both of [ARDA](#)'s legislative proposals, including making timeshare-specific changes to the provisions passed in two condo/HOA bills passed during the 2024 Florida Legislative Session (HB 1021 and HB 1203).

**HB 897** by Representative Berfield – **No action was taken in the House last week. However, this bill was added to the House Housing, Agriculture, and Tourism Subcommittee agenda for today, Tuesday, April 1, 2025.**

**SB 496** by Senator McClain – **No action was taken in the Senate last week. However, this bill was added to the Senate Regulated Industries Committee agenda for today, Tuesday, April 1, 2025.**

## CFHLA SUPPORTS

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### Interchange Fees on Sales Tax (Eliminate Swipe Fees)

CFHLA supports **prohibiting the collection of interchange on sales tax**, which will provide relief to businesses, which will in turn provide relief to consumers.

## CFHLA SUPPORTS

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### Schedule for Session Week 5 (March 31 - April 4, 2025)

To view the Senate's schedule, [CLICK HERE](#).

To view the House's schedule, [CLICK HERE](#).

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### Seeking Nominations to Serve on the CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors



The [CFHLA Political Action Committee and CFHLA Political Committee](#) are bi-partisan committees that protect the interests of the hospitality and tourism industry by educating and mobilizing our members to become more politically active, as well as supporting candidates for state and local office who are pro-tourism and pro-hospitality.

Currently, there are seven (7) vacancies on the CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors and we are seeking qualified lodging and allied candidates to serve on the CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors beginning May 28, 2025.

If you are interested in learning more about these vacancies, please contact CFHLA President & CEO Robert Agrusa at [robert.agrusa@cfhla.org](mailto:robert.agrusa@cfhla.org).

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### Upcoming CFHLA PAC/PC Meeting

The next CFHLA PAC/PC Board of Directors Meeting will take place on **Wednesday, May 7, 2025 from 8:15 a.m. - 9:15 a.m. at the CFHLA office.**

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### Upcoming Governmental Affairs Meeting

The next CFHLA Governmental Affairs meeting will be held on **Wednesday, June 18, 2025 at the Holiday Inn Orlando - International Airport (thank you, R.P. Rama) from 12:00 noon - 1:30 PM.**

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## DONATE to CFHLA PAC

CFHLA MEMBERS - Please **consider making a small donation of \$50** via the link below to the CFHLA PAC/PC. All contributions help CFHLA expand its efforts to support Hospitality-Friendly candidates who are running for local and state offices in the future. **Throughout the 2024 Election Cycle, 27 of 31 or 87% of the PAC endorsed candidates were elected into office.**

[DONATE](#)

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## IN THE NEWS

[First-ever Florida Tourism Day Expo comes to Tallahassee Wednesday](#) - Florida Politics

[Gov. DeSantis says hotel taxes could fill budget holes once property tax phased out](#) - Florida Politics

[Geraldine Thompson and Harris Rosen could get Orange County road tributes](#)- Florida Politics

[House proposes slashing state sales tax for \\$5B consumer savings](#) - Florida Politics

[Gov. DeSantis pitches property tax relief, but cooler on sales tax cut](#)- Florida Politics

[House Budget unveiled at \\$4.4billion less than Senate, cuts revenues by slashing sales tax](#)- Florida Politics

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## CONNECT WITH CFHLA



[WWW.CFHLA.ORG](http://WWW.CFHLA.ORG)

**About CFHLA**

**6675 Westwood Blvd #210, Orlando, FL 32821**

**The mission of the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association is to represent the Central Florida Hospitality Industry, by setting the standard of excellence through advocacy, collaboration, education, recognition, and service.**