Vice Mayor Finnerty’s Legislative Update for January 2020

The following have been taken from the Florida League of Cities Clips January 7th, 8th and 9th issues. These “clips” relate to the upcoming 2020 legislative session which begins on Tuesday January 14th. Several pieces of legislation will have an impact on St. Pete Beach and our beach community, such as: short term rentals, water quality, resiliency and sea level rise, environmental infrastructure, transportation and land use. If legislators run true to form based on previous legislative sessions preemption will be the call of the day to reduce the authority of local governments.

Report: Preemption legislation driven by ideology, campaign contributions and lobbyists
*Florida Politics*
Integrity Florida likens the state Legislature’s moves to limit home rule by local government to using a sledgehammer to kill a fly. The government watchdog group has released a report looking at lawmakers’ increasing use of preemption legislation to reduce the authority of local governments. As of Dec. 10, 16 preemption bills — nine in the House and seven in the Senate — have been filed for the 2020 Legislative Session. The bills have been filed by Republicans and Democrats. They deal with issues such as local occupational licensing (HB 3), permitting standards for mobile home parks (HB 647), vacation rental properties (SB 1128) and home-based businesses (SB 778). Already drawing heavy attention has been a proposal (HB 113 and SB 172) that would prevent local governments from banning certain types of sunscreens and cosmetics. The proposal would prevent Key West from enforcing a ban on sunscreens containing chemicals that could be harmful to coral reefs. In 2019, a total of 45 preemption bills were filed, including 25 House and 20 Senate bills. Ten passed, including legislation stopping local governments from passing bans on plastic straws for five years. But Gov. Ron DeSantis vetoed it. [Source](#)

Watchdog group warns of Florida lawmakers controlling local governments
*Tampa Bay Times*
One of the state’s only nonpartisan watchdog groups is out with a new report warning about the Legislature’s recent crackdowns on local governments. The report by Integrity Florida found that state lawmakers have increasingly been filing bills meant to limit the power of local governments to raise taxes, regulate businesses or even ban plastic straws. And the GOP-led Legislature is often doing it on behalf of their corporate-backed donors, including Associated Industries of Florida and the Florida Chamber of Commerce, the report finds. “It’s a trend that should be concerning to those of us who believe in the traditional conservative principle that government governs best when it’s closest to the people,” said Ben Wilcox, the organization’s research director. The findings are nothing new to the League of Cities and Association of Counties, groups that have been warning about local pre-emption laws for years. [Source](#)

Ten big issues to watch during the 2020 session
*News Service of Florida*
The 2020 legislative session will start Jan. 14 as House and Senate members gather to hear Gov. Ron DeSantis’ State of the State address. Lawmakers will take up a wide range of issues during the 60-day session, along with negotiating a budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1. Here are 10 big issues to watch during the session ... BUDGET: DeSantis has proposed a $91.4 billion budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, touting plans to set minimum teacher salaries at $47,500 a year and to continue addressing environmental issues. DeSantis’ proposal is a starting point for the House and Senate, which will make changes as they negotiate a final version. Lawmakers also will consider
potential election-year tax cuts, with DeSantis proposing sales-tax “holidays” for back-to-school shoppers and for hurricane preparations. **Source**

**The Key Issues Entering The 2020 Florida Legislative Session**

*WUSF*

When the Florida Legislature convenes on Jan. 14 for the start of its 60-day session, lawmakers will be faced with several important issues – with raising teacher pay and placing new limits on abortion among the top priorities. Here is a list of several other issues the legislature will tackle during the session. **Source**

**OUR VIEW: Legislative overreach is clearly out of hand**

*Sarasota Herald-Tribune*

It’s a principle that sounds sound: State legislatures should make certain that their citizens can rely on fairly consistent treatment under the law as they move, for business or pleasure, from one county or municipality to the next. By using the practice known as preemption to impose a uniform standard, they can ensure that state and local regulations do not conflict too radically in such core areas as taxation, transportation, environmental management, population growth or emergency health care. But like just about any governmental tool, statewide preemption can be deployed injudiciously to consolidate political power and prevent local governments from determining their own futures. In the past few years, according to a new report by Integrity Florida, preemption has become the go-to recourse when our Legislature wants to slap down — with purely ideological or even less defensible motives — some idea in a city or county that it doesn't want to see going viral. **Source**

In the next ENewsletter I will provide updates on legislation moving through the House and Senate as the 2020 session gets started. There are a lot of issues coming up that affect our community and we need to stay aware. Please be sure to contact your state representatives listed below and let them know how you feel about legislation pertaining to issues that have an impact on your life and the life of your family, as we move through the 2020 Legislative session.

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