


ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

LEGISLATIVE DAILY BRIEF



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FROM MAY 12, 2003

Today marks the first day of a special session called by Governor Jeb Bush to enact a spending plan and some related bills. The House and Senate Republican leadership have agreed to abstain from revenue increases but some allocation issues still remain unresolved.

The state constitution allows the Legislature to take up more issues than those officially proclaimed by the governor (a process referred to as “expanding the call”) upon a two-thirds vote of the membership of both houses. The House speaker and Senate president has earlier announced a agreement to expand the call to include

- automobile insurance reform
- workers compensation insurance reform
- implementation of the class-size amendment
- implementation of the smoking ban amendment
- implementation of the court-reform amendment

The special session got off to a rough start, however, when the House leadership could not muster a two-thirds vote to move this agenda forward. Eighty affirmative votes were required; 73 were cast. (Only 108 of 120 House members were here today.) Democrats in the House blocked the leadership’s plan in a unified act of retaliation against the party’s exclusion from back-room negotiations that took place between House and Senate Republicans last week. It is expected that House Republicans will find a path around this roadblock. The governor might expand the call himself or the House could vote again when more members are present later in the week.

There has been little discussion about medical liability reform. While the speaker said he hoped that the Senate would agree to the House medical liability reform proposal, it was not on the Senate president's agenda for this special session. It is more likely that this issue will be addressed in a special session later in the summer.

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