



Office of the Volunteer State Chair
1628 Woodgate Way
Tallahassee, FL 32308-0530
(850) 778-3795

Capitol Report 2015

February 13, 2015

Filed by: Ben Wilcox, Governmental Consultant

Overview

This week there was little action on issues of concern to Common Cause Florida. The Senate Ethics and Elections Committee did not meet and the House Governmental Operations Subcommittee had no elections or ethics related items on its agenda.

Next week that will change. On Tuesday, the Senate Communications, Energy and Public Utilities Committee will meet to discuss two bills Common Cause Florida is tracking that deal with the state's Public Service Commission (PSC).

SB 288 by Senator Jack Latvala is a good PSC reform bill that would require the Commission hold public customer service meetings around the state, require PSC lobbyists register as legislative lobbyists and require the Governor to remove any PSC member who violates the ex parte statute.

SB 230 is another good consumer bill by Senator Charles Dean that would prohibit a public utility from charging a higher rate based on an increase in energy usage when that increased usage is attributable solely to an extension in the billing cycle.

Also next week, we have set up a meeting with Secretary of State Ken Detzner. We will discuss the Secretary's priorities in the area of elections for the coming session.

Legislation

Common Cause Florida is currently tracking a number of bills that have already been filed for the coming legislative session. They include:

- SB 228 and HB 227 - These bills would create an online application process for voter registration. Common Cause Florida supports this legislation.
- SJR 208 - This bill would propose a constitutional amendment that, if passed by voters, would automatically restore the voting rights of non-violent ex-felons, once they have completed the terms of their sentences. Common Cause Florida supports this bill.
- SB 170 and HB 199 - These bills would prohibit elected officials from serving on the Public Service Commission for two years after they leave office and

create districts that Commissioners would have to be appointed from to ensure statewide representation. Common Cause Florida supports these bills.

- SB 230 and HB 81 – These bills would prohibit a public utility from charging a higher rate based on an increase in energy usage when that increased usage is attributable solely to an extension in the billing cycle. It also prohibits a public utility from making any change in a billing cycle without obtaining approval from the Florida Public Service Commission at least one month before the effective date of the change.
- SB 288 and HB 219 – These bills would reform the Public Service Commission to require those who lobby the PSC register as legislative lobbyists, require the PSC to hold public customer service meetings around the state and require the Governor remove any PSC member who violates the ex parte statute.
- HB 473, HB 67 and HB 4001 – These bills would repeal the nuclear cost recovery law passed in 2006 that allows power companies to charge customers in advance for nuclear plants that may or may not eventually get built. Common Cause Florida is closely watching these bills.
- CCFL is also hoping a campaign finance reform bill will be filed by Senator Soto that would place new restrictions on candidates coordinating with political committees to solicit funding and run advertising. If the bill is filed, we will let you know the number.

Capitol Report will be filed weekly when the legislature holds committee meetings and during the legislative session. We will let you know if there is any recommended action that can be taken by Common Cause members that would be helpful to our lobbying efforts.