

ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA
**LEGISLATIVE
INTERIM BRIEF**



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DAILY INTERIM LEGISLATIVE BRIEF FROM JANUARY 24, 2001
SOURCE: ASSOCIATED INDUSTRIES OF FLORIDA

Florida House of Representatives' Speaker Tom Feeney released his House Committee Assignments on Tuesday, January 9th at a New Member Training Luncheon at the Civic Center. House Speaker Tom Feeney generously allowed AIF staff to monitor this "legislators only" event. AIF was the only lobbying organization allowed in the luncheon.

While the media made much of the "Feeney vs. Frankel" conflict during the post-election mania as it revolved around Florida's electoral college, inside the Capitol, an unusually good relationship appears to be developing. In an unprecedented move, Rep. Lois Frankel, House Democrat Minority Leader, requested the privilege of introducing Speaker Feeney at the luncheon. Speaker Feeney gladly agreed. In her introductory remarks regarding the House committee assignments, Rep. Frankel said that Speaker Feeney's assignments, "far exceed anything we have received by your predecessors." In making the assignments, Speaker Feeney insured that the ratio of Republicans to Democrats on the committees exactly matched that of the entire House. Historically, both Republican and Democratic Speakers have applied a 2 to 6% cushion in committee assignments to make doubly sure the committee votes went the way of the majority party. Rep. Frankel's warm remarks were well received.

In his remarks, Speaker Feeney said that observers would have to, "go back 14 years, to Speaker Jon Mills, to maybe find a Speaker's committee assignments that so accurately reflected the ratio in the overall House." Speaker Feeney pledged to lead the House with a philosophy of limited governance, as so clearly expressed by our nation's Founding Fathers in the U. S. Constitution.

The professional courtesies demonstrated by Speaker Feeney and Rep. Frankel bodes well for the House in the days and weeks ahead.

The luncheon capped off ten days of training provided to the newly elected members of the Florida House. Both Speaker Feeney and Minority Leader Frankel believed such a demanding regimen was necessary for the new members, given their unprecedented number, 63, thanks to term limits. The training, coordinated and hosted at the Speaker's request by the James Madison Institute, was, "the most intensive training program that we know of for any legislature anywhere in the world," according to Speaker Feeney.

Despite the training, both House and Senate Interim Committee meetings were held this week. The meetings provided little substantive debate, held primarily for the purpose of introduction and orientation.

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