



# DAILY BRIEF

**From October 22, 2007  
Special Session "D"**

The House began its Session at 3:30 pm and immediately began amending **Senate Joint Resolution 2D**. **Representative Dean Cannon (R-Winter Park)** offered a "strike everything" amendment and inserted the new House plan that was outlined last Friday. The new plan includes a guaranteed Save Our Homes (SOH) benefit, portability of the SOH benefit, a 5% cap on property tax increases for non-homestead properties, an exemption of \$25,000 for the tangible personal property tax, provides limitations on assessed values for affordable housing, creates more flexibility for the Legislature to limit assessments for working waterfront properties, and requires the election of all county property appraisers. Although several amendments were offered only a few were adopted including:

- The section on working waterfront property was changed and now the language in the bill is broader. The new language is "As defined by general law, land that is used as working waterfront property may be assessed as provided by general law, subject to conditions or limitations specified therein. Assessments under this subsection shall apply to all levies other than school district levies;"
- The cap on assessment on property tax for non-homestead property will not go into effect until January 1, 2009; and
- Removed the section of the bill that required the Legislature to limit the authority of local governments to increase property taxes.

Now the new House property tax relief plan, as amended, includes the following areas:

- Instead of doubling the homestead exemption, a guaranteed SOH benefit is being offered. This exemption is tied to the county's median home value and will target relief to those homesteaded property owners who bought homes in the last few years and new homestead property owners who need it most.
- SOH-like cap on non-homestead and commercial property will help restore fairness, equity and predictability to Florida's property tax system by capping any increase at 5%. This will help businesses who have faced outrageous tax increases and those who own second homes. However, this cap will not take place until January 1, 2009.
- Portability – homeowners may transfer their SOH benefits to a new homestead anywhere in Florida within 2 years of leaving their former homestead.
- Creates a new Tangible Personal Property Exemption of \$25,000.
- Provides for limitations on assessed values of properties used for affordable housing.
- Creates more flexibility for the Legislature to limit assessments for working waterfront properties.
- Election of all county property appraisers.

Republicans and Democrats complemented the bi-partisan effort that led to the final product. Even though the vast majority of the members spoke in favor of the new plan, some voiced concerns about how fiscally constrained counties and the special districts responsible for fire rescue and medical services could be negatively affected. They encouraged the leadership to negotiate with the Senate to see if those areas can be addressed. In the end, **SJR 2D** passed by a 108 to 2 vote.

The House announced that they will not meet again until 12:00 pm on Thursday, October 25th. Earlier today, **Senate President Ken Pruitt (R-Port St. Lucie)** sent a memorandum to all Senators saying they would not come back to Tallahassee until Thursday at the earliest.

AIF urges the Florida Legislature to pass a property tax reform plan that will be embraced by the voters in our state and that is meaningful to both citizens and businesses. We need a constitutional amendment that can pass the Florida Legislature by a three-fourths vote and also be approved by the voters by 60%.