

Capitol Report

Week Ending March 22, 2019

Overview

Week three featured two major Elections bills that infringe on Floridians right to vote, and one bill to improve voter access. In November 2018, Floridians voted overwhelmingly to pass Amendment 4 restoring the right to vote to over 1.4 million formally convicted people throughout the state. This week, legislators introduced [HB7089](#) and [SPB7086](#), which restricts the number of people who, as of January 8, 2019, are eligible to have their voting rights restored by including felonies not included in the 2018 Amendment. The House bill also expands the definition of “completion of sentence” to cover fines and fees that are unrelated to a person's sentence and currently not included as part of the existing clemency process.

The Voter Registration Maintenance bills, [SB230 \(identical to HB131\)](#), will result in inaccurately identifying eligible Florida voters as noncitizens and create obstacles to their fundamental right to vote. Florida has an unfortunate history of inaccurate and improper list matching policies that cost eligible citizens their right to vote. In 2011- 2012, the DOS created a list of more than 180,000 voters it initially asserted were noncitizens after an attempted match between driver license information and the voter roll. The list of names was then considerably narrowed to approximately 2600. Of the 2600 names, hundreds of citizens came forward to indicate they had been misidentified. The final list was 85 people. By imposing these burdens on eligible Florida citizens, and the Supervisors of Elections, this bill undermines election integrity. Last week the bill passed Favorably by Ethics and Elections and heads to its final committee, Infrastructure and Security.

On the bright side, the House State Affairs Committee unanimously passed [PCB SAC 19-01](#) on Elections. Similar to SB7066, the bill seeks to improve on many of the fundamental flaws in the state election laws by increasing voter access; more time to correct signature errors; improved ballot design requirements and allows for ballot selfies among other changes. Common Cause is still evaluating this bill to ensure all of the bills components help and do not hurt voters.

This week's best and the worst. You can read the full list of actions on our priority bills [here](#). Note, many of the bills that we are tracking are moving quickly and already in their second Reading.

Tip:

Reading

Each bill or proposed constitutional amendment must receive three readings on three separate days in each legislative house before it can be passed (unless waived by a two-thirds vote of the members for readings on the same day).

These readings are:

First Reading - The bill is introduced, and its title is published in the journal; sometimes first reading takes place during a chamber session.

Second Reading - After favorable reports by all committees of reference, the bill is available for placement on the calendar. When it is considered on the floor, it is read a second time by title. Amendments may be considered. If amendments are adopted, the bill is engrossed.

Third Reading - The bill is read by title a third time. Debate on final passage occurs, and a vote is taken; a two-thirds vote is required to amend at this stage.

GOOD

- **[SJR690: Single Subject Limitation for Taxation and Budget Reform.](#)** Passed Favorably from the Rules Committee and placed on the calendar for 2nd Reading. **Common Cause supports this bill.**
- **[SJR74: Single-subject Limitation for Constitution Revision Commission Proposals.](#)** Read 2nd time and placed on the calendar for 3rd reading. **Common Cause supports this bill.**
- **[SB342: Public Records/Voters and Voter Registration.](#)** Providing an exemption from public records requirements for information concerning preregistered voter registration applicants who are minors. Passed Favorable by the Ethics and Elections Committee, now in Governmental Oversight and Accountability. **Common Cause supports this bill.**
- **[PCB SAC 19-01](#)** (similar SB7066) Elections. See above.

BAD

- **[SJR232 \(identical to HB57\): Percentage of Elector Votes Required to Approve an Amendment or a Revision.](#)** Amends the State Constitution to increase the percentage of elector votes required to approve an amendment or a revision to the State Constitution from 60 percent to 66 and 2/3 percent. It passed favorably by Ethics and Elections, now in Judiciary. **Common Cause opposes this bill.**
- **[CS/CS/HJR 249 and linked HB251: Repeal of Constitution Revision Commission.](#)** Repeals the Constitution Revision Commission. Passed Favorably by the Judiciary Committee. **Common Cause opposes this bill.**

Looking Ahead to Week 4

Watch live on **[The Florida Channel](#)** or view On Demand Video from the committee page.



Monday, March 25, 1:30 pm - [Criminal Justice Committee](#).

- **SPB7086: Voting Rights Restoration**. Revising terminology regarding voting rights restoration to conform to the State Constitution; requiring the voting disqualification of certain felons to be removed and voting rights restored pursuant to s. 4, Art. VI, of the State Constitution; requiring the Department of Corrections to include notification of all outstanding terms of sentence in an inmate's release documents; requiring each county detention facility to provide information on the restoration of voting rights pursuant to s. 4, Art. VI of the State Constitution to certain prisoners. **Common Cause opposes this bill.**

Monday, March 25, 3:00 pm - [Civil Justice Subcommittee](#).

- **HJR57: Percentage of Elector Votes Required to Approve Constitutional Amendment or Revision**. Amends the State Constitution to increase the percentage of elector votes required to approve amendment or revision to State Constitution from 60 percent to 66 2/3 percent. **Common Cause opposes this bill.**

Take Action Now

- Call the Senate [Criminal Justice Committee](#) members and let them know you oppose [SPB7086: Voting Rights Restoration](#).
- Call the House [Civil Justice Subcommittee](#) members and let them know you oppose [HJR57: Percentage of Elector Votes Required to Approve Constitutional Amendment or Revision](#).

LEGISLATION

Common Cause Florida is currently tracking a number of bills. They include a record number of bills to improve elections and a record number to preempt local communities from self governance. These bills have been filed by legislators and subject matter committees. The Common Cause Florida Team has put them in online tracking application for you here : <https://airtable.com/shrn93mUWOql2il2Z>

Position Code: **N** – No position; **O** – Oppose; and **S**- Support

The Capitol Report is filed weekly. We will send special notices for actions that can be taken by Common Cause members in our advocacy efforts. Follow [Common Cause Florida](#) on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Text **MATTER** to **97779** to join our list of [Common Cause Florida](#) members willing to take action to strengthen our democracy. If you want reminders for the upcoming legislative action and public meetings,

Text **MATTER** to **97779***

*Message & data rates may apply. Common Cause may contact you with campaign updates and other offers of engagement. Reply STOP to unsubscribe at any time.

