

Florida Governmental Countdown - A Wrap-Up on Issues from the 2013 Legislative Session

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Government Law & Policy

Florida's 2013 Legislative Session, early on, was marked by greater accord than in past years. The contributing factors: camaraderie between House and Senate leadership, the absence of party factions of former sessions, a rebounding economy producing a budget surplus, and the fact that lawmakers were not facing re-election. However, on Day 57, bipartisan goodwill eroded when House Democrats gridlocked floor debate by requiring each bill to be read in full, and jeopardized the passage of major legislation in retribution over the absence of an agreement to federally-fund health care for the poor.

This paramount issue divided the Republican House, Senate and Governor from day one: whether to accept or reject over \$50 billion in federal funds during the next decade to cover a million uninsured Floridians as envisioned by the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA). A move by the House to reject Medicaid expansion outraged Democrats and countered Governor Rick Scott's dramatic decision to embrace federally-funded expansion after his earlier opposition. Instead, legislative leaders opted for private insurance plans with the House rejecting support from Washington and the Senate primarily choosing to utilize the federal dollars. An impasse remained until Session's end.

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