



THE FLORIDA SENATE
SENATOR BEN ALBRITTON
President

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators
FROM: Ben Albritton
SUBJECT: Senate Tax Relief Package
DATE: April 9, 2025

Later this week, the Committee on Finance and Tax will release Senate Proposed Bill (SPB) 7034, which contains the Senate’s tax relief proposal for this session. In my view, this proposal encompasses an “all of the above” approach to broad-based tax relief, balancing key priorities announced by Governor DeSantis and the Florida House in a targeted manner that offers meaningful, long-term tax relief for families and seniors. We are creating permanent tax relief on essential items needed by families and seniors and targeting sales tax holidays Floridians use when they’re planning to purchase specific items. This level of both permanent and one-time sales tax relief is sustainable for the long term and leaves room in our balanced budget for the voters to consider meaningful property tax relief on the ballot at an upcoming General Election, as our state continues to save for the future, pay off debt, cut spending, and improve efficiency.

SPB 7034 Will Permanently Eliminate the Sales Tax on Clothing and Shoes

The bill will continue our efforts to keep Florida affordable by permanently eliminating the tax on most clothing and shoes. As you are aware, essential items like food purchased at the grocery store, medicine, diapers, baby and toddler items, and many personal care items are already tax free. When we looked at the list of items that are still subject to sales tax, clothing and shoes stood out as an area where we can make a true and lasting impact.

Targeting tax relief to clothing and shoes priced at \$75 or less covers clothes for growing kids and teenagers as well as essential items adults and seniors have to replace more frequently due to normal wear and tear.

I love going out to eat as much as anybody else, but the fact is – eating at restaurants is a luxury, that’s why grocery store food is tax free. So is medicine. So are diapers. For my part, I’d rather keep attacking and eliminating taxes on essentials that people need day in and day out. We know this kind of savings will make an impact Floridians feel. Every year during our back-to-school

tax holiday, we see an increase in spending on clothes. The problem is, we all know that life doesn't always wait for a sales tax holiday. Kids grow, mom has a new job interview, or grandpa needs walking shoes – things come up, and year-round, permanent savings on essentials matters.

SPB 7034 Will Provide Voters the Opportunity to Decide on Property Tax Relief

Similar to legislation filed by Senator Martin, the bill directs the Office of Economic and Demographic Research to conduct a study to establish a framework to reduce, or hopefully eliminate, property taxes for homesteaded property.

The study will include the following (at a minimum):

- An analysis of the potential impact of eliminating property taxes on public services, including education, infrastructure, public safety, and emergency services.
- An assessment of potential housing market fluctuations, including changes in homeownership rates and property values.
- An analysis of consumer behavior regarding home improvements that currently result in property tax increases, including elevating homes in flood-prone areas, adding a mother-in-law suite, etc. and whether reducing or eliminating property taxes would change consumer behavior leading to an increase in resiliency.

The report must be submitted to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by November 1, 2025. The Senate will use this information to craft a constitutional amendment for voters to consider during the next General Election.

I agree with Floridians who are not only frustrated by the cost of property taxes, but also with the very idea that you have to keep paying in perpetuity for the privilege of living in a home you bought and paid for long ago. The whole concept doesn't sit right with me either. However, I believe we need to accept the fact that unwinding the State's largest source of revenue that funds local emergency response, public safety services, and education should not be taken lightly. I appreciate the Governor's proposal to bridge the gap between now and the next election through a one-time rebate.

For my part, I was in the House in 2017 and voted in favor of HJR 7105, which increased by up to \$25,000 the current homestead exemption, exempting the assessed valuation of homestead property greater than \$100,000 and up to \$125,000. As you know, the amendment was rejected by Florida voters in 2018.

Like most of you, last year, I voted in favor of HJR 7017 which requires the current \$25,000 homestead exemption be adjusted annually for positive inflation growth. As you know, that amendment was passed by voters and took effect on January 1, 2025.

Our constitution delegates matters of property tax to the voters for a reason. I believe the best course of action is to present the voters with a comprehensive amendment for their consideration at the next election. For that reason, I believe we should seriously think about pausing other Joint Resolutions on property taxes for the remainder of the 2025 Regular Session. I'm concerned about potentially competing or contradictory property tax amendments on the 2026 ballot. SPB 7034 will lay the foundation for major reform of the property tax system, which could render unnecessary other well-intended efforts brought forward this session.

SPB 7034 Will Renew In-Demand, Highly Utilized Tax Holidays

Over the last decade, sales tax holidays, particularly for hurricane season and back-to-school have become something Floridians have come to expect and plan for. I've included a list below of the tax holidays our bill will renew for the upcoming fiscal year. Our goal was to avoid overlapping holidays, which can be confusing for consumers and retailers alike.

- **Back-to-School Tax Holiday**

While permanently eliminating the tax on clothes and shoes takes up a huge chunk of the back-to-school holiday, school supplies, especially items like a new computer for a teen heading off to college, can be pricy. Our bill will create a 10-day "back-to-school" sales tax holiday from August 1-10, 2025, for backpacks costing \$100 or less, school supplies costing \$50 or less, learning aids costing \$30 or less, and personal computers or computer-related accessories, including non-recreational software, costing \$1,500 or less.

- **Disaster Preparedness Tax Holiday**

The legislation will create a "disaster preparedness" sales tax holiday from June 2 – 15, 2025, for disaster preparedness supplies. Some examples of tax-free items include: flashlights and lanterns costing \$40 or less; reusable ice costing \$20 or less; radios costing \$50 or less; tarps and ground anchors or tie down kits costing \$100 or less; coolers and portable power banks costing \$60 or less; batteries and fuel tanks costing \$50 or less; smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide detectors costing \$70 or less; and generators costing \$3,000 or less. The holiday also includes a number of items related to the safe evacuation of household pets.

- **Freedom Month: A Month-Long Tax Holiday on Recreational Items**

From July 1 – July 31, 2025, purchases of admissions to music, sporting, and cultural events; tickets to movies and museums; single admission or season tickets to theatre and dance performances; state park admission and annual passes; and use of fitness facilities will be tax free. Tickets, memberships and passes, purchased during this time for use any time from July 1 – December 31, 2025, are tax free.

The month-long summer sales tax holiday will also apply to sales of certain boating and water activity equipment and supplies, camping equipment and supplies, fishing equipment and

supplies, electric scooters, general outdoor supplies (including sunglasses, sunscreen, and grills), and residential pool chemicals, supplies and parts.

- **Skilled Worker Tax Holiday on Tools**

The legislation will create a seven-day sales tax holiday from August 29-September 7, 2025, for certain tools used by skilled trade workers. Tax-free items include certain hand tools costing \$50 or less and power tools costing \$300 or less, work boots costing \$175 or less, and many other pieces of safety equipment, as well as certain shop lights, toolboxes and belts, and plumbing and electrical equipment.

- **Hunting Season Tax Holiday**

Our bill will also create a new tax holiday from September 15 – October 19, 2025, offering savings on ammunition, firearms, bows, crossbows, and related accessories. This new holiday will allow Floridians exercising their constitutional right to hunt to participate in a sales tax free hunting season.

Additional Tax Relief Provisions of SPB 7034

Among other provisions of SPB 7034, I wanted to highlight the following:

Extending the Freeze on Local Cell Phone and TV Taxes

HB 7063 (2023) froze the local communications services tax rates for three years. The local communications services tax rate in effect on January 1, 2023, may not be increased before January 1, 2026. Similar to SB 1352 by Senator Trumbull, SPB 7034 will extend the current freeze until 2031.

Home Away From Home Tax Credit

SPB 7034 will also contain provisions of SB 182, Tax Credits for Charitable Contributions, by Senator Calatayud, which we passed unanimously passed earlier today. The bill will create the Home Away From Home Tax Credit, which provides tax credits to Florida businesses for contributing to charitable organizations that house families of critically ill children at little or no cost to the family while traveling so the child can receive care.

I look forward to further discussion of these important issues in the coming days.