

FLAPOL

Sunburn — The morning read of what's hot in Florida politics — 2.14.20

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By Peter Schorsch | February 14, 2020

... The House and Senate passed their budgets with unanimous votes, sending the Legislature to debate over key disparities in their \$91 billion-plus spending plans.

But the squabbling over differences can wait until next week. For now, lawmakers are patting each other on the back for what has so far been a remarkably non-turbulent Legislative Session.

Praise came in from both sides of the aisle, with North Miami Democratic Rep. **Dotie Joseph** lauding House Budget Chief **Travis Cummings**.

"It is refreshing when you find someone in this process who keeps their word," she said.

Likewise, Senate Budget Chief **Rob Bradley** offered a positive outlook on the approaching bicameral budget negotiations.

"If you really do a deep dive on the two budgets and you look at the difference in (general revenue) spending ... it's a lot closer than perhaps it appears on first blush," he said.

Still, there are some significant details to hammer out — \$ 1.4 billion worth, to be exact.

Among the key differences: the Senate is fully funding the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund with \$387 million and \$52.5 million for VISIT FLORIDA — two positions where the House diverges, offering \$144 million and zero dollars respectively.

The Senate's plan also sets aside \$125 million for Florida Forever, well above the \$20 million contemplated in the House and the \$100 million by the Governor.

And then there's teacher pay. The House and Senate have each committed to meeting Gov. **Ron DeSantis'** ask of raising starting teacher pay to \$47,500, but their formulas for reaching their aren't fully in sync — expect the fine print on this one to be a work in progress through the final hankie drop.

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