



Cutting Through the Red Tape — Bringing Personal Accountability Back to Florida

State Representative Toby Overdorf

In his opening address for the 2025 legislative session, Speaker Daniel Perez challenged members to take a hard look inward — to identify areas where our own government has grown beyond its original intent. It was a call not for partisan posturing, but for accountability and restraint. Since then, Florida has embarked on a mission to lift regulatory and economic burdens on its citizens.

According to Florida's 2024 Joint Administrative Procedures Committee (JAPC) Annual Report, Florida's state agencies have proposed **16,419 rules** since 2015. To put that in perspective: that's over sixteen

thousand layers of regulations — each with ripple effects across Florida's communities, businesses, and families. The **Department of Health** leads the list with **2,597 rules**, followed by the **Department of Financial Services** with **1,642**.

Each of these rules often comes bundled with hundreds of thousands of pages of guidance documents, forms, and procedures — many of which may never have reflected the true legislative intent, were not specifically approved by the legislative branch and have largely gone unchallenged by the judiciary. Over time, this creates a thicket of bureaucracy that confuses

citizens, burdens businesses, increases costs, and stifles innovation.

Reclaiming Legislative Oversight

That's why the Administrative Procedures bill of 2025 was a cornerstone reform and a line in the sand. Although the title suggests more red tape, it requires every agency in the state to **re-examine every single rule and guidance document** on its books. This is not just a cleanup effort; it's a reaffirmation of legislative intent.

Under this bill, agencies must ensure that their rules accomplish what the Legislature actually intended. The process will be systematic, transparent, and grounded in the principle that government should serve Floridians, not frustrate them or cause undue economic harm.

When a bill is created or significantly updated in Florida, our agencies are required to review its potential financial impact on Floridians. That process, known as the **Statement of Estimated Regulatory Costs (SERC)**, has become outdated, inconsistent, and often devoid of public input.

This bill modernizes it — setting a **new framework of criteria** for how assessing costs and requiring this information to be **made public**. In an age where transparency is the best safeguard against government overreach, this reform ensures that citizens and businesses can see exactly how proposed rules will affect their wallets.

Good governance isn't about more rules — it's about the right rules, applied wisely. This initiative doesn't strip away essential protections; it restores balance and intent. It asks every agency to pause, reflect, and realign with the people's representatives.

In the second half of 2025, Florida embarked upon the journey that would affect every business, landowner, and resident within the state: property taxes. These taxes are collected by local governments and are imposed upon the owners of private property throughout the state.

Over the last three years, property tax revenue has increased by \$18 billion. Left unchecked, the 67 counties and 411 municipalities will soon reach an annual collection of \$60 billion. This is a staggering number considering two items. Property taxes are, on average, less than 40% of a typical municipal budget, and the entire legislative budget is roughly \$112 billion. The rapid growth in revenue is far outpacing population growth and inflation, thus causing an undue financial burden on Florida's residents.

As fiscal conservatives who believe in the rights of property owners, enough is enough. It is time to lift the yoke of tax oppression and create permanent tax relief. In Florida, this requires a constitutional amendment passed by 60% of our citizens. While the exact ballot language has not yet been completed, the initiative must not shift the burden entirely onto our growing business community. It must keep local government revenue collection in check.

This is what responsible government looks like — one willing to look at itself in the mirror and make changes for the better.

Representative Toby Overdorf is a member of the Florida House of Representatives representing the 85th House district, which includes parts of Martin and St. Lucie counties.