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Florida Legislature

House, Senate differ on issues in \$80 billion budget proposals

By Gary Fineout
Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE — Republicans in charge of the Florida House and Senate have drawn up rival spending plans that differ on everything from money for schools to spending on incentives to lure businesses to the state.

The two chambers on Friday released their official budget proposals for the coming year.

Legislators have until March to reconcile the rival spending plans and pass a budget for spending from July 2016 to June 2017.

Last year a clash between the House and Senate over health care spending resulted in a stalemate that wasn't resolved until midsummer.

Senate President Andy Gardiner and House Speaker Steve Crisafulli insist they will get

their work done on time this year.

Here are a few highlights of the two budgets as now proposed:

Spending: The House budget is almost \$80 billion, while the Senate spending plan is about \$1 billion more. Both budget proposals are higher than what Gov. Rick Scott proposed.

Schools: The Senate has proposed raising school spending

2 percent more than this year, or almost \$142 more for each student. The House proposal would increase student spending by 1.75 percent, or about \$124 more.

But both school funding proposals would rely on increased local property taxes. The House has \$45 million for a controversial teacher bonus program opposed by Florida's teacher union, but the Senate budget does not include the funding.

Tax cuts: Scott has made a tax-cut package one of his main priorities this session. The House has rolled out a tax-cut package that would total nearly \$1 billion. The cuts would not kick in right away but instead would take effect over a 2½ year period. The Senate has yet to offer up its own tax cut package. But top senators have suggested they might roll

See LEGISLATURE, 5A

Naples Winter Wine Festival



COREY PERRINE/STAFF (2)

Sabrina Foad, 5, of Naples, cheers with the NCEF All-Stars as they celebrate on stage and pump up the crowd Friday at the Greater Naples YMCA. Hundreds came out to support the Naples Children & Education Foundation during its annual Meet the Kids Day. Charities showed their work at booths.

Where the money goes

Meet the Kids Day 'warms your soul,' inspires

By Liz Freeman
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Rojelio Gutierrez wants to attend Yale University and then come back to Naples to be a police officer.

The 11-year-old had a rough start in life, but through Friends of Foster Children Forever, he is united with his grandmother.

naplesnews.com/winefestival

See videos and more photos and stories about the festival.

He is thriving in fifth grade at Sabal Palm Elementary School in Golden Gate Estates. He's a whiz

See KIDS DAY, 10A



Tyrese Gibson, who has co-starred in the "Fast and Furious" movie series, speaks Friday at the Greater Naples YMCA.

Health officials: Bug-borne Zika virus not here yet, but be wary

By Liz Freeman
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The mosquito-based Zika virus has yet to strike anyone in Southwest Florida — but public health officials want people in the area to be cautious.

The Florida Department of Health in Collier County outlined how the virus could afflict someone here.

"As of now, a locally acquired case of Zika virus could occur if an infected individual (returning from an affected country and who was exposed to the virus) is bitten by a mosquito locally, and that same mosquito bites another person," Jefferson Welle, a spokesman with the local health department, said in an email.

After the recent heavy rains, the health department is reminding residents that taking steps to reduce standing water helps reduce the mosquito population.

In essence, a "drain and cover" program advises homeowners to drain standing water from garbage cans, flower pots, coolers, toys and anywhere else rainwater collects.

If a case of Zika is diagnosed in the area, the local health department will

See ZIKA VIRUS, 5A

INSIDE

Life at the epicenter of Zika cases; Brazil might be close to test for virus. 36, 37A

Collier County | Fatal home invasion

Woman, 23, gets 15 years in prison for role

By Ryan Mills
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A North Naples woman was sentenced Friday to 15 years in prison for her role in the 2014 robbery attempt that killed a Marine Corps veteran.

Detectives said Mallory McCann, 23, helped plan the robbery attempt. They said it led two accomplices to the East Naples home of Christopher Corey, 25, in search of drugs and money early Jan. 20, 2014. Corey was shot fatally when he fought back.

After the killing, McCann agreed to work with prosecutors

to build their case against the other suspects.

In exchange for her cooperation, McCann pleaded no contest to an armed robbery charge and faced five to 20 years behind bars. Without the plea deal, she could have faced life in prison if convicted.

"I know none of this would have happened if it weren't for me, and I will live with this for the rest of my life," McCann said from the stand, turning her attention to



Christopher Corey

naplesnews.com

Read previous coverage of the East Naples home invasion case and watch a video about it.

Corey's parents. "And I am so sorry. I know that I've never said that. And I know I'll never be able to make up for it, but I will try every day, I will try to better myself and my family and the people around me."

Speaking in court, Corey's parents, Michelle and Jesus Cisneros, depicted McCann as a remorseless mastermind of the attack,

See KILLING, 5A



Mallory McCann, 23, reacts Friday in a Collier County courtroom to being sentenced to prison. McCann was accused of helping plan a home-invasion robbery that turned violent, leaving Marine Corps veteran Christopher Corey dead in 2014.

RYAN MILLS/STAFF

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Naples Winter Wine Festival



Max Hatch, 17, reacts to seeing Hollywood star Tyrese Gibson, below right, Friday at the wine festival event at the Greater Naples YMCA. Max said Gibson is his favorite actor. "It was amazing," Max said. "I was, like, in shock and I cannot believe it." COREY PERRINE/STAFF (4)



Gregory C. Ferrero, left, managing director at Goldman Sachs, speaks Friday at the event at the Greater Naples YMCA.



Luke Redmond, 6, of Estero, asks Hollywood star Tyrese Gibson for an autograph on a "Fast and the Furious" toy car as Theresa J. Shaw, president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Collier County, watches Thursday at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort in North Naples.

KIDS DAY from 3A

at math. And he is not shy about thanking trustees of the Naples Children & Education Foundation for all they do for local children.

"They get kids away from doubt," Rojelio said. "Every kid has doubt they can't achieve their goals." Rojelio was one of 120 children at Meet the Kids Day at the Greater Naples YMCA on Friday.

Thirty-four children's charities showed NCEF trustees and supporters what they do with grants from proceeds of the annual Naples Winter Wine Festival.

The three-day festival, which has raised more than \$135 million since its inception in 2001, is this weekend.

More than 200,000 children in low-income families have been helped with physical, emotional and educational services by more than 40 charities.

Last year, more than \$12.3 million was raised and \$8.1 million was distributed in annual grants to charities.

An additional \$3.8 million was designated to support long-term strategic initiatives.

Many NCEF trustees supporters say Meet the Kids Day, always the day before the signature auction, is their favorite part of the weekend.

"It really tugs at your heart," said Joan Clifford, co-chairwoman of the Kids Day event this year.

Also serving on this year's grant committee,



A display for the Miracle University after-school program in Immokalee is shown Friday at the Greater Naples YMCA.

Clifford said she didn't have a figure when it comes to the total raised.

"You just hope people are supportive," she said. "This event really makes a difference in the community."

The wine festival gets better each year and Meet the Kids day is special, too, NCEF trustee Adria Starkey said. It's when children can share their positive experiences through the funded programs, she said. "It just warms your soul," Starkey said.

Dick Grace, owner of Grace Family Vineyards in Napa Valley, California, said his continued support of the event is be-

cause NCEF is disciplined in following up with the children it helps.

"This is (about) continuing to carry the message to produce outstanding citizens, as opposed to citizens who fall through the cracks," Grace said.

"They have made a profound difference to the entire area."

Friday's program at the Naples YMCA featured a segment of a "Great Expectations" talk show. A few local children and young adults sat with host TaSheekia Perry and shared how they have been helped by NCEF-supported programs.

That included Max

Hatch, 17, who was adopted by special-needs teacher Beth Hatch at Shadowlawn Elementary School in East Naples.

When she first met Max in 2000 at the school, he was 3 years old, weighed 12 pounds and suffered from abuse and neglect.

One abuser had held him under water.

He was removed from his home and placed in three foster homes before meeting his future adoptive mother.

"I was the blessed one to meet Max," Beth Hatch said at Friday's program.

She named the local charities that have helped Max through the years

with his almost two dozen medical conditions.

"He rallies every day and continues to thrive due to the overwhelming support from friends, from complete strangers and some of you," she said.

In 2014, the Dalai Lama presented Max with an Unsung Heroes of Compassion award in San Francisco, a program that Dick Grace, owner of the Grace Family Vineyards, helped start in 2001 through his family foundation.

Another NCEF star, Regine Francois, a 2015 Immokalee High School graduate of distinction, returned from her freshman year at Columbia Univer-

sity to tell about her life in New York.

She is studying sustainable development and business management, and is involved in numerous extracurricular activities, including helping young kids from Harlem learn about careers.

"Every day is truly an adventure," Francois, 19, said. "I'm so busy I thrive on it."

"To accomplish your dreams, you have to put your all in what you do."

A special guest arriving at the end of the program was Tyrese Gibson, a singer, songwriter and actor perhaps best known for co-starring in the "Fast and the Furious" movie series.

Gibson encouraged NCEF kids to put aside the hardships they have faced in their lives and pursue their dreams.

He spoke about how some of the most successful people he knows are born into challenging situations.

Gibson said he grew up with drug-addicted parents in south-central Los Angeles, where gangs were all around, yet a troubled life was not going to be his destiny.

He had the several dozen kids in the room hold up their fingers and offered a message:

"There is no one in the world who has the fingerprint on your fate," he said.

Gibson agreed to group photos with the kids, including a solo shot with Max Hatch, who said Gibson is his favorite star.

"It was amazing," Max said. "I was, like, in shock and I cannot believe it."