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Editorial

Legislature continues its power grab

THE ISSUE: Power grab continues in Legislature.

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Midway through the state's annual lawmaking season, the GOP-led Legislature continues moving to seize power from the governor, the courts, local government, even from the people who elected the legislators.

Recently, we outlined the Legislature's attempt to weaken the court system, which is, in theory at least, a separate and equal branch of government. Unfortunately, that power grab is only a piece of what sure looks like an agenda aimed at undermining institutions throughout the state — except, of course, the Legislature.

The audacity is breathtaking, with lawmakers proposing measures that would:

Do away with several locally governed agencies that build roads.

Give the Legislature an automatic do-over if one of its proposed constitutional amendments gets thrown off the ballot by the Florida Supreme Court. Meanwhile, that same bill would impose new regulatory burdens on citizen groups that try to change the constitution through petition.

Prohibit local governments from passing ordinances on issues ranging from guns to fertilizer, and impose a two-year moratorium on new impact fees.

Prohibit local governments from controlling their own destiny by requiring a supermajority vote to change their growth plans.

Strip the state's water-management districts of their ability to set tax rates, handing that authority over to — who else? — the Legislature. Another bill would require the governor's appointments to water-management district boards first go through a nominating commission stacked with legislative appointees.

We suppose this legislative feeding frenzy shouldn't come as a surprise.

The stage was set last year with a bill requiring legislative consent for any regulation that would cost

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Regulations are supposed to be written by executive branch departments so they can implement laws. But legislators, after passing laws, decided they wanted another bite at the apple.

Perhaps Florida's lawmakers need to re-read the Constitution. We know it's bit of a long read, but the concept of separation of powers seemed lost on too many of our legislators.

Time for a refresher course. Or, better, time for the citizenry to refresh their memories.

BOTTOM LINE: Let lawmakers know you want them to abide by the Constitution.

What to do

If you don't want Florida legislators grabbing power from other branches of state government, as well as local governments and the people, contact:

Senate President Mike Haridopolos at 850-487-5056 or haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov

House Speaker Dean Cannon at 850-488-2742 or dean.cannon@myfloridahouse.gov

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