



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All communications distributed in mass, including in electronic format, require review and approval *prior to* distribution. The articles included below have been preapproved. However, please remember that you still need approval from the Majority Office before distributing an article if you change it or if you include it with other unapproved material. Refer to chapter 4 of the Administrative Policy Manual for more information on the House mass communications policy.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Passed Both Chambers

HB 5001 General Appropriations Act	2
CS/SB 7026 Public Safety	2
CS/HB 7087 Taxation	3
CS/HB 7055 Education	3
HJR 7001 Supermajority Vote for State Tax or Fees	4
CS/SB 4 Higher Education	4
CS/HB 29 Military and Veterans Affairs	5
CS/CS/HB 21 Controlled Substances	6
CS/CS/CS/HB 1279 School District Accountability	6
HB 37 Direct Primary Care Agreements	7
CS/CS/SB 1392 Criminal Justice	7
CS/HB 41 Pregnancy Support and Wellness Services	7
CS/CS/HB 351 Prescription Drug Price Transparency	8
Select Committee on Hurricane Preparedness and Response	8

### Passed House Only

CS/CS/CS/HB 3 Economic Development and Tourism Promotion Accountability	9
CS/CS/HB 459 Public Records	9
CS/HB 9 Federal Immigration Enforcement	10
CS/CS/HB 7007 Ethics Reform	10
HB 15 Deregulation of Professions and Occupations	11
CS/CS/HB 33 Texting While Driving	11
HB 35 Patient Safety Culture Surveys	12
HB 23 Recovery Care Services	12
HB 7015 Property Insurance Assignment Agreements	12
HB 7003 Local Government Ethics Reform	12
HB 7 Local Government Fiscal Transparency	13
HB 7009 Workers' Compensation	13
CS/HB 17 Community Redevelopment Agencies	13
CS/CS/HB 7057 Budget Transparency	14



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

HB 27 Certificates of Need for Hospitals	14
HB 5 State Officer Post-service Lobbying Restrictions	15
CS/HB 11 Government Accountability	15
CS/HB 19 Motor Vehicle Insurance	15
HB 13 Sports Franchise Facilities	16
CS/HB 7083 Emergency Management	16
HB 1429 Dismemberment Abortion	17
CS/CS/CSHB 751 Public Assistance	17
CS/CS/HB 7073 Government Integrity	18
CS/HB 25 Labor Organizations	18
CS/HB 7085 Health Care Disaster Preparedness and Response	19
HB 6001 Traffic Infraction Detectors	19
CS/HB 693 Family Self-Sufficiency	19

## Passed Both Chambers

### **Legislature Passes Balanced Budget**

The Legislature passed a constitutionally-required balanced budget for FY 2018-2019. Our budget continues our conservative approach of responsibly funding our state's critical needs, including significant investments for funding hurricane response and preparedness, addressing agriculture and environmental needs, providing funds for important health care programs, and increasing total funds per student by \$101.50. The House budget also continues our commitment to tax relief by buying back the value of property value growth in the K-12 funding formula to prevent property tax increases. Finally, the budget responsibly plans for the future by placing \$3.3 billion in reserves to prepare for any unforeseen future economic uncertainty.

I believe this budget covers important elements that will positively affect all Floridians while also securing long-term budget surpluses for the future.

### **Florida Legislature Strengthens School Safety in the Wake of Parkland Tragedy**

What transpired in Parkland this year was a heartbreaking tragedy. In an effort to ensure this never happens again, the Florida Legislature passed SB 7026 that comprehensively addresses this issue.

The bill addresses firearm safety, school security, inter-agency information sharing and coordination, mental health, and victim's privacy. This bill is the result of numerous conversations across the aisle and with constituents. Additionally, this bill includes a mandate for in-depth investigations into every facet of this issue in order to find out what went wrong and how it could have been prevented.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

In addition, the Florida House also voted to issue subpoenas to local agencies regarding any interactions those agencies had with the shooter, as well as information regarding the response by the agencies to the shooting incident. It is our duty to protect our citizens, and I promise that when it comes to keeping Florida's children safe, no issue is too big or complex.

## Florida Legislature Passed Florida First Tax Package Proposal

The Florida Legislature passed HB 7087, the 2018 Tax Cut Package that puts the needs of Floridians first and foremost.

The Legislature passed a bill to cut taxes for millions of Floridians. Under this tax package, families and students, business owners, farmers, military and servicemembers, and others will receive a tax cut from the Florida House. The following are some highlights of the tax package proposal I am proud to support:

- Helps make education more affordable with a three-day **Back-to-School Holiday**
- Reduces the **Business Rent Tax** for businesses
- Provides relief to farmers with the **Hurricane Irma or Citrus Greening Property Tax Reduction, Fuel Tax Exemption, Hurricane Reconstruction Tax Exemption (Building and Fencing Materials)**
- Protects Florida's families and homes from natural disasters with the **Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday** and **Generators for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities**, and provides assistance related to the 2016 and 2017 storms with **Homestead Property Relief**
- Honors the 1.6 million veterans and their families in Florida with updates to **Veteran-specific Ad Valorem Exemptions**

This bill would have made a substantial contribution to improve the prosperity and opportunity for all Floridians. I strongly support this bill because it puts Floridians first.

## Education Reform bill Signed by Governor

This session the Legislature passed HB 7055, which is a comprehensive package of reforms that incorporates some of the bills you saw earlier this session and furthers our goal of providing a world-class education to all children in Florida.

The bill incorporates HB 1, which establishes The Hope Scholarship program that creates a pathway for students who are subjected to an act of violence or abuse at school to pursue their education with hope, dignity, and an opportunity for success.

The provisions from HB 25 in the bill include reforms to the annual public employee union registration renewal process to increase transparency and accountability for those organizations that represent instructional personnel.

The bill also increases access to quality school choice options by: expanding the allowable uses of the Gardiner Scholarship; establishing Reading Scholarship accounts for struggling readers; establishing the Florida Sales Tax Credit Scholarship Program to provide an additional funding source for the Gardiner



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

Scholarship Program and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program to allow more students access; and allowing high-performing charter schools to replicate two schools, and to expand grade levels or increase enrollment based on current capacity rather than the original capacity at the time of the contract. The bill strengthens oversight and accountability of private schools participating in scholarship programs.

The bill also increases district flexibility by expanding the Principal Autonomy program statewide and allows highly trained principals who complete specialized training to manage multiple schools.

Other polices in the bill include providing the Commissioner of Education with authority to coordinate resources during an emergency; providing that a home education student participating in a dual enrollment program is not responsible for providing his or her own instructional and providing an appropriation to cover such costs; and providing Florida Virtual School students access to district testing facilities.

I support this bill because I believe this comprehensive package of reforms will create transformational change in Florida's educational system and ensures a bright future for generations to come.

## **Florida Legislature Passed Legislation to Protect Taxpayers**

This session, your Florida Legislature passed HJR 7001, a proposed constitutional amendment that would protect taxpayers and Florida's long-term economic future by requiring a supermajority vote to impose any new state tax or fee or to raise any existing state tax or fee. I believe this effort compliments the good work your Florida House has achieved over the years by cutting taxes, cutting regulations, and cutting fees. Governor Scott has echoed these sentiments and is committed to working with the Legislature to continue to keep more money in the pockets of Floridians.

Your Florida Legislature is dedicated to passing legislation that will prevent future tax hikes that would endanger our workforce and the livelihood of Florida families.

## **Excellence in Higher Education Act of 2018 Signed by Governor**

This session, the Legislature passed SB 4, which establishes the Excellence in Higher Education Act of 2018. The goal of CS/SB 4 is to maintain and improve the quality of higher education in Florida.

The bill revises multiple student financial aid and tuition assistance programs. One of the biggest changes is to the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship. Specifically, the bill will cover the full cost of tuition and fees plus a stipend of \$300 for books for the Florida Bright Futures Academic Scholars award. The Florida Medallion Scholars award will cover 75% of the full cost of tuition and fees. The bill also expands the Benacquisto Scholarship to include qualified out-of-state students and increases funding for the First Generation Matching Grant Program. I believe the increases and expansion of these scholarships will provide more students with the chance to pursue and achieve their higher education goals.

SB 4 also requires the Board of Governors (BOG) to provide the Legislature with recommendations for future consideration on the most efficient process to achieve a complete performance-based continuous improvement-funding model. The model should be focused on outcomes and provide for the equitable



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

distribution of performance funds. The Legislature will also review recommendations from an independent entity that must consult with the BOG to receive input on behalf of the state university system.

The bill also increases oversight of state university direct-support organizations (DSO), by revising the appointment and approval process for members of a DSO board of directors, increasing public access to records, and requiring that university transfers of any state appropriation to direct-support organizations by a board of trustees may include only funds pledged for capital projects.

Additionally, to promote the free flow of ideas on our state university campuses, the bill clarifies that an individual's expressive rights may not be infringed upon, and that an institution is prohibited from restricting expressive activities to a particular area of campus and prohibited from designating free speech zones. If an individual believes their expressive rights have been violated by a postsecondary institution, they may seek declaratory and injunctive relief, including reasonable court costs and attorneys' fees.

I proudly support this bill and any effort to strengthen our state university system, hold them accountable to the students and the taxpayer, and continue to give opportunities to all students.

## **The "Don Hahnfeldt Veteran and Military Family Opportunity Act" Passed Legislature**

This session, the Florida Legislature passed HB 29, which eases many professional licensing fees and requirements for certain military members, veterans, and their spouses.

A military and veteran presence will forever be important to our state. These brave men and women not only place themselves in harm's way to protect our freedom and liberty, they are also a stable and significant force in Florida's growing economy.

We are grateful to those courageous Floridians who have made the selfless decision to serve our country. We will never be able to repay them for the sacrifices they have made, but in an effort to express our gratitude, the bill will provide allowances for military members, veterans, and their spouses by expanding or creating fee waivers and select regulatory waivers for a variety of professional licenses.

The bill also designates March 25 every year as "Medal of Honor Day" and allows classroom instruction related to the values of the recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor to meet certain instructional requirements on character development and the contributions of veterans to our country. I believe this goes a long way towards ensuring that future generations appreciate the sacrifices made to protect our freedoms and liberties.

I proudly voted for this bill because I support any measure that strengthens support for our military and veteran community and gives them the opportunity to succeed in Florida's workforce.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

## **Florida Legislature Passed Opioid Bill**

This session, your Florida Legislature passed HB 21 to target the opioid crisis affecting our nation and state. Drug overdoses now represent the leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., the majority of which involve an opioid. In Florida, heroin caused 952 deaths, oxycodone caused 723 deaths, and hydrocodone caused 245 deaths in 2016.

HB 21 limits prescriptions for Schedule II opioids to alleviate acute pain to a three-day supply, or a seven-day supply if deemed medically necessary by the prescriber. The bill creates exceptions to the prescribing limits for cancer, terminal illness, palliative care, and serious traumatic injury, and requires co-prescribing of emergency opioid antagonists for the latter.

The bill authorizes DOH to share data in Florida's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) with other states and permits DOH to integrate the PDMP with practitioners' electronic health recordkeeping systems. The bill also requires practitioners to review a patient's PDMP history prior to prescribing or dispensing certain controlled substances. Failure to do so results in a nondisciplinary citation the first time and potential licensure action each time thereafter.

Your Florida Legislature strongly supports policies that will bring a resolution to opioid addiction and suffering. This crisis requires all of us to take a stand and help our family, friends, and community. If you would like more information on this bill please contact our office. If you or someone you know is suffering with an opioid addiction please contact 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

## **Legislature Passed School District Accountability Bill**

The Legislature passed HB 1279, a comprehensive bill that brings a new level of financial transparency and accountability to Florida's education spending, while also driving productivity improvements and parity between school districts.

The bill produces greater financial transparency by requiring school districts to post on their websites summary financial data regarding the efficiency of dollars spent by the district, and it requires the Department of Education to create an online tool that identifies public schools that produce high academic achievement based on per pupil spending. It also requires school districts to post summary financial information, which includes detailed information regarding the amount spent per student for instructional staff and administrative staff. The results must be reported in an easy to use format and must allow the user to compare performance data among schools and districts.

In addition to requiring more data reporting, the bill also takes steps to increase the financial accountability of school districts to prevent financial emergencies. HB 1279 requires large school districts to employ an internal auditor, limits the amount that school board members are compensated to the amount no higher than that of first year teachers, withholds superintendent and school board salaries during a financial emergency and only until the financial emergency no longer exists, and allows for greater oversight from the Auditor General.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

In order to give school districts and the Department of Education adequate time to prepare for the implementation of these policies, this bill goes into effect July 1, 2019.

I believe this bill ensures that our state's public schools use your tax dollars in the most efficient and effective way possible. I am proud to support legislation that gives Florida's taxpayers the transparency and accountability they deserve from their elected officials.

## **Florida Legislature Passed "Direct Primary Care" Reform**

This session your Florida Legislature passed HB 37, which specified that direct primary care agreements do not constitute insurance.

HB 37 helps expand the use of direct primary care (DPC) in Florida by preventing DPC agreements from being regulated like insurance. DPC is a medical practice model that eliminates third-party payers from the doctor-patient relationship. By written agreement, a patient or employer pays a monthly fee to the primary care provider for defined services. After paying the fee, a patient can use all services in the agreement at no extra charge.

One of the most critical problems in healthcare is out of control and unjustifiable costs. DPC cuts costs by eliminating the administrative hassles of the third-party payer system, and lets patients and doctors define their business relationships – not government.

Your Florida Legislature is dedicated to passing legislation that will increase access to quality and affordable health care for all Floridians.

## **Florida Legislature Passes Criminal Justice Reform**

The Florida Legislature passed SB 1392 that provides several reforms to the criminal justice system. One of the main provisions of the bill is one that will expanded the collection of criminal justice data, and bring uniformity to the data across the state. Unfortunately, the existing data collection process is either inconsistent across agencies and departments or lacking crucial information. As a result, we have been flying blind while attempting to implement criminal justice reforms.

This bill will bring Florida to the forefront of the nation in terms of criminal justice data collection. That will help us locate and diagnose trends in crime and law enforcement, while bringing unprecedented insights into policymaking. By collecting accurate, valid, and reliable data, we could have accurately tailored future crime prevention legislation, creating a pathway to a safer Florida.

## **Florida Legislature Passed Improvements to our Pregnancy Support Services Program**

This Session, your Florida Legislature passed important health care reforms to the Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program (FPSSP), which will help increase access to affordable and quality health care for Floridians.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

HB 41 codifies the existing Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program (FPSSP). It requires the Department of Health to contract with the Florida Pregnancy Care Network (FPCN) to provide pregnancy support services that promote and encourage childbirth, and wellness services. Pregnancy support services are services that promote and encourage childbirth, including direct client services, program awareness activities, and communication activities. Wellness services include services or activities intended to maintain and improve health or prevent illness and injury, like anemia testing, assistance with smoking cessation, and screenings for high blood pressure, thyroid functioning, cholesterol, and diabetes. This bill requires that any services provided under FPSSP be provided in a manner that is non-coercive, and does not include any religious content.

Your Florida Legislature is dedicated to passing legislation that will increase access to quality and affordable health care for all Florida women and their families.

## **Florida Legislature Passed Prescription Drug Transparency**

This session, your Florida Legislature passed HB 351, which requires pharmacists to disclose the lowest cost available for a customer's prescription drug and prohibits certain insurance practices that limit patient access to pricing information and.

The bill requires pharmacists to communicate to a patient the availability of a more affordable alternative drug if one exists and whether the patient's cost sharing obligation exceeds the retail price for a covered prescription drug. The bill also requires a contract between a pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) and a health insurer or health maintenance organization to limit the amount the patient pays for a drug to the lesser of the applicable cost sharing amount or the retail price in the absence of prescription drug coverage.

Under this bill, your local pharmacist will have the freedom to disclose your true prescription drug cost options. The third-party payer bureaucracy surrounding pharmacy care and management will be prohibited from applying any mechanism preventing you from paying the lowest applicable price for a particular drug.

Your Florida Legislature is dedicated to passing legislation that will ensure that Floridians are presented with all the facts about their prescription drug costs. I strongly support this measure because it will increase access to quality and affordable health care for all Floridians.

## **Florida House Prepares Florida for the 2018 Hurricane Season**

This session, your Florida House took action on the lessons learned from Hurricane Irma and began preparing our state for future hurricane seasons.

Following four months of committee hearings, relying on their own experiences, conversations with their constituents and local emergency management officials, and over 16 hours of presentations and discussions with experts from numerous fields, the committee members agreed to a list of proposed recommendations for consideration and further development by the standing substantive and fiscal



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

committees of the House. On January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018 the Select Committee held its final meeting and unanimously voted to approve their final recommendations to help improve Florida's Hurricane Response and Preparedness.

The fundamental themes addressed by the recommendations include: Vulnerable Populations Residing in Health Care and Residential Facilities, Shelters and Vulnerable Populations, Evacuations, Hardening and Restoring Florida's Electric Grid, Restoring Our Communities, and Mitigating Future Damages.

I strongly support the efforts of the committee to examine how our states can best prepare for the next hurricane. I will continue to keep you updated as your Florida House works to protect our community and state. If you would like to view the final report from the committee it is available at <http://bit.ly/2mRD7Rw>

## Passed House Only

### **Transparency and Accountably Bill Passed Florida House**

This session, the Florida House passed HB 3, which would have brought greater transparency to local tourism promotion agencies (TPA) and economic development agencies (EDA).

Throughout the state, TPA's and EDA's have shown a pattern of misuse and abuse when it comes to your tax dollars. A few of the much-needed accountability and transparency measures in the bill included: requiring all contracts valued over \$5,000 to be published on the TPA's or EDA's website; requiring all contracts valued over \$250,000 be submitted to the local governing authority before execution and published on their website 14 days in advance; establishing new standards for the auditing of TPA and EDA expenditures; instituting conflict of interest and other ethical provisions to safeguard the use of taxpayer money; and making it a criminal offense to avoid the transparency and accountability requirements in the bill.

I supported holding these agencies accountable because I believe anyone receiving public dollars should be completely transparent and always disclose how they are spending taxpayer dollars.

### **House Passed Trade Secrets Law Reform Bill**

Recently, numerous agencies have been in the spotlight for unjustified spending of taxpayer money while attempting to hide behind public records exemptions for trade secrets. I believe the citizens of Florida have a right to know about where, how, and under what terms their tax dollars are being spent.

This session, the Florida House passed HB 459 and HB 461, which would have aimed to bring clarity when handling trade secrets by creating a uniform definition of "trade secret" and a uniform process for handling trade secrets. The definition would have clearly specified information that does not constitute a trade secret, and the uniform process would have provided clear direction to agencies when responding to public records requests for records that contain information claimed to be a trade secret.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

I supported holding government agencies accountable and I believe these agencies should not be allowed to hide certain information related to how they are spending taxpayer dollars by claiming that such information is protected as a trade secret.

## **“Rule of Law Adherence Act” Passed by the Florida House**

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 9, also known as the “Rule of Law Adherence Act.” The purpose of the Act was to ensure that federal immigration laws are followed in our state.

Here are four important provisions in the Act that would have accomplished that goal:

- 1) Require state and local governmental entities and law enforcement agencies to comply with and support the enforcement of federal immigration law;
- 2) Require any sanctuary policies currently in effect be repealed within 90 days of the effective date of the Act;
- 3) Require officials or employees of state and local governmental entities or law enforcement agencies to report violations of the Act to the Attorney General or state attorney; and
- 4) Allow a person injured by the conduct of an alien unlawfully present in the United States to sue a state or local governmental entity or law enforcement agency whose violation of the Act contributed to the person’s injury.

Florida is a beautifully diverse state, which we should always celebrate. However, it is also true that our nation’s immigration process is dependent on our ability to properly enforce our current immigration laws. I supported this bill because it would have helped fix our immigration system, and protect our citizens and the rule of law.

## **Florida House Combats Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in Ethics Reform Package**

The Florida House passed a bill this session that proposed important ethics reforms that included the strongest anti-sexual harassment policy for state employees in the nation. There is no place in our capital city, our state, or the workplace for unacceptable and unwanted behavior.

Never again should one's job title or position of power shield them from accountability for inappropriate conduct. We must protect the dignity of victims and witnesses, and ensure they will not be bullied or intimidated. It is time for the culture of corruption and silence on this issue to end and people to be held accountable.

Additionally, the bill would have prohibited state and local officers or employees from soliciting a conflicting job; required disclosure and reporting on offers of conflicting employment; required state legislators and statewide elected officers to disclose changes in employment and pay raises immediately when the employer has interests in the legislative process; and imposed a two-year ban on former agency directors from lobbying any state agency.



## **Florida House Passed Professional Deregulation Bill**

This session, the Florida House passed HB 15 seeking to deregulate certain professions. The goal of the bill was to provide more job opportunities for Floridians while protecting their health and safety.

The bill would have allowed certain professionals to practice their chosen profession without obtaining licensure from the Department of Business and Professional Regulation, reduced the hours of training required to obtain certain licenses, and eliminated the requirement that certain professionals obtain a separate license and pay additional fees for their businesses.

Numerous professions would have been effected by the bill, including: hair braiders; hair wrappers; body wrappers; boxing announcers; boxing timekeepers; labor organizations; barbers; restricted barbers; nail specialists; facial specialists; full specialists; nail polishers; and makeup applicators. In addition, the following licensed professionals would no longer have had to pay an additional fee to obtain a separate license for their businesses: architects; landscape architects; geologists; interior designers, asbestos abatement consultants and yacht and ship brokers (branch offices only).

I fully supported professional deregulation because it would have removed unnecessary government barriers, would have been a key component in allowing businesses to grow more easily and would have created more job opportunities for Floridians.

## **Florida House Passed 'Texting While Driving' Bill**

This session, the Florida House passed HB 33, Texting While Driving, which would have made the existing ban on texting, emailing, or instant messaging while driving a primary offense. Currently, law enforcement officers must detain a driver for another traffic offense in order to cite him or her for violating the ban. By making the existing ban on those activities a primary offense, law enforcement officers would have been able to detain a motor vehicle operator solely for texting while driving.

The bill would have maintained the current penalties and exceptions to the ban and maintained that the ban does not apply to stationary motor vehicles. The bill would have also included safeguards to protect individuals' privacy rights by ensuring law enforcement officers follow certain protocols before they could access a driver's wireless communications device during a traffic stop for a suspected violation of the ban. Finally, the bill would have required law enforcement officers to record the race and ethnicity of persons cited for violating the ban on texting while driving and directed the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to compile this information and annually report the data to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Texting while driving presents a real, life-threatening danger to Floridians both on and off the road. I believe that providing law enforcement the ability to enforce the 'Texting While Driving' ban as a primary offense would have helped save lives. This bill would have struck the appropriate balance between roadway safety and protecting our individual civil liberties, which is why I proudly voted for it this session.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

## **Florida House Passed Improvements to our Health Care system**

This session, your Florida House passed two health care reform bills, that would have helped increase access to affordable and quality health care for Floridians: HB 35 and HB 23.

HB 35 would have required all Florida hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs) to complete patient safety culture surveys and required the Agency for Health Care Administration to publish the data. These surveys would have asked employees about patient safety and quality of care in the facility, to help facilities identify and fix problems. When published, the survey data would have also helped Floridians make decisions about which facilities are best for their own care and that of their families.

HB 23 would have expanded the use of ASCs and allowed recovery care centers (RCCs) in the state. ASCs are non-hospital facilities that provide surgical care. ASCs have highly skilled staff and surgeons and are less expensive and have lower infection rates than hospitals. The bill would have allowed patients to stay in ASCs for up to 24 hours, instead of requiring discharge the same business day, which would have allowed more types of patients to use ASCs. RCCs provide post-surgical and post-diagnostic, short-term medical and nursing care, support, and pain control for patients that do not require hospitalization. RCCs exist in some states, but not Florida.

Your Florida House is dedicated to passing legislation that will increase access to quality and affordable health care for all Floridians.

## **Florida House Approves Property Insurance Assignment of Benefits Reform Bill**

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 7015, which would have addressed abuses involving agreements that assign the benefits of a residential property insurance policy to a third party.

An assignment of benefits (AOB) is a legal tool that allows a contractor, repair person, or other vendor to “stand in the shoes” of a property owner and receive the proceeds of a property insurance policy for repairs to the covered property. For example, when homeowners experience water damage and contact a repair person for assistance, the repair person will have the homeowner execute an AOB so work can begin immediately and the repair person can seek payment directly from the insurance company. Since 2006, the number of lawsuits involving AOBs have risen astronomically, generally resulting in higher payouts and litigation costs. These increased costs are ultimately paid for by consumers as higher insurance premiums. The bill included provisions that would have protected consumers and reduced litigation associated with AOBs.

I proudly voted for this bill on the House floor because I believe it would have protected consumers and helped reduce property insurance premiums for homeowners.

## **The Florida House Approves Local Government Ethics Reform**

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 7003, which would have reformed ethics guidelines for local governments. Some of the provisions of the bill included the following: requiring certain elected local officers to file a more detailed financial disclosure; expanding annual ethics training requirements for local



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

officers; expanding restrictions when a conflict of interest exists; and requiring lobbyists to register with a statewide database before they can lobby local government bodies.

I was proud to support this bill and will continue to find ways to reform government and hold elected officials to the highest ethical standard.

## **Florida House Passed Bill Focused on Local Government Fiscal Transparency**

This session, the Florida House passed a bill that would have increased local government fiscal transparency.

HB 7 would have focused on helping citizens gain access to important information so they could be more engaged on important government decisions. Some of the bill's provisions included: improving access to voting records related to local option taxes and debt issuances; enhancing access to tax history and property tax information; expanding public notice requirements; and improving local government reporting requirements for economic development incentives.

Your Florida House was proud to support this bill because Floridians deserve to know how their tax dollars are spent.

## **Florida House Passed Workers' Compensation Bill**

After recent court rulings found parts of Florida's workers' compensation law unconstitutional, the Florida House passed a comprehensive bill to address the recent case law, increase rate competition, and provide measured changes focused on system cost drivers. Through the many proposed changes, the goal of HB 7009 was to ensure the quick and efficient delivery of wage replacement and medical benefits to an injured worker and to facilitate the worker's timely return to gainful reemployment at a reasonable cost to the employer. The bill was expected to result in significant savings in overall workers' compensation system costs, which would have led to reduced premiums.

I supported this bill and think it would have improved the state's workers' compensation system for all of those involved.

## **Florida House Passed Community Redevelopment Agencies Reform Bill**

The Florida House passed HB 17 earlier this session to reform community redevelopment agencies (CRAs). CRAs are created by cities or counties to address slum, blight, or affordable housing shortages through redevelopment. While in committee, members found that some CRAs use taxpayer dollars for improper purposes and that all CRAs need better reporting and oversight. The committee also found that cities and counties can already perform many of the same functions as CRAs.

HB 17 would have fixed these problems by increasing transparency and accountability for CRAs. It would have required board members to receive ethics training, required the Department of Economic Opportunity to declare inactive CRAs meeting certain criteria, and required more oversight of each CRA's



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

budget process. In addition, the bill reformed the process for creating new CRAs and would have required current CRAs to receive support from a super majority of the governing board of the creating city or county to continue.

Any government program that uses taxpayer money should be held to the highest standards. I proudly voted for this bill because I believe too many CRAs do not live up to such standards.

## **Florida House Passed Bill to Increase Budget Transparency**

This session, the Florida House passed HB 7057 to address transparency in, and access to, the operating budgets of state entities. Currently, state agencies are required to submit their operating budget and budget requests to the Legislature for the upcoming year. However, some state entities are not reliant on state appropriations for their operating budgets, and thus, their budgets are not subject to the same scrutiny.

This bill would have required any statewide entity created by law or the State Constitution that is controlled or operated by the Governor or the Governor and members of the Cabinet, or is related to a department of state government, to follow specific steps that provide transparency if the entity receives its operating income through a funding source other than through the state budget. The operating budget would have had to be approved at a publicly noticed meeting and made available on the entity's website at the time the meeting was noticed. Once approved, the operating budget would have had to be submitted to the chairs of the legislative appropriation committees and the Executive Office of the Governor by July 1 of each year. The bill also would have required operating budget information to be posted to the state entity's website.

I believe that without transparency and accountability in our government, we will never be able to secure and maintain the public's trust. This bill would have ensured that trust by guaranteeing that the budgets of these entities are available to the public for inspection. I supported this bill because I believe Floridians have the right to know where and how their tax dollars are being spent.

## **Florida House Passed "Certificate of Need" Reform**

Your Florida House passed HB 27 this session, which would have eliminated the state's "Certificate of Need" (CON) program for hospitals.

The CON program, administered by the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), requires certain health care providers to obtain state approval before entering the market or offering certain new or expanded services. The CON program currently regulates hospices, skilled nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities for the developmentally disabled, hospitals and certain specialized hospital services.

The CON program reduces competition in the health care market, causing unnecessary and unfair cost increases for consumers. These market-entry barriers prevent or delay innovation, and they incentivize competitors to push each other out of the market with lawsuits rather than competing based on quality.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

HB 27 would have removed hospitals and hospital-based services from Florida's CON review program. As a result, any person wishing to build or replace a hospital, or establish specialized services in a hospital, would have only needed to go through the AHCA licensure process. If an applicant met the licensure statutes and regulations, the applicant would have been permitted to offer new or additional hospital facilities or services to patients in the state without first obtaining a CON from AHCA.

Your Florida House believes this bill would have reduced costs and increased the quality of care for Floridians.

### **House Members Vote to Extend Post-Service Lobbying Bans**

The Florida House of Representatives passed HB 5, which would have extended the current ban on post-service lobbying from two years to six years. The ban would prevent legislators and state officers from personally representing a person or entity for compensation before any state agency or state government body. The six-year ban would have been the first of its kind and the strictest ban in the country.

In my view, extending the timeframe of the lobbying ban would have helped eliminate any actual and perceived revolving door of elected officials profiting off their time in public office. I believe that holding public office is a sacred trust, and I was proud to have strongly supported both measures.

### **Florida House Passed Government Accountability Bill**

This session, the Florida House passed HB 11, which would have further increased transparency and accountability in government.

The bill would have held government accountable by ensuring state agencies and local government entities have internal controls in place to curb waste, fraud, and abuse and promote efficiency in their operations. The bill increased transparency by requiring budget documents for cities and counties to be available online for a certain amount of time so citizens would know how their tax dollars are being spent.

The bill also would have reformed public testimony laws so people would have the opportunity to speak at local board and commission meetings without having to submit their comments in advance. This bill may have had an insignificant negative fiscal impact on the state and local governments, but it was primarily a bill that focused on increasing government accountability and transparency.

I supported this bill and pledge to continue looking for ways to make government more transparent, efficient, and accountable to taxpayers.

### **Motor Vehicle Insurance Bill Passed Florida House**

The Florida House passed HB 19 this session, which would have reformed motor vehicle insurance in Florida. The goal of HB 19 was to increase access to meaningful insurance coverage while bringing personal responsibility and accountability to the system.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

The Florida Motor Vehicle No-Fault Law, also known as Personal Injury Protection (PIP), requires vehicle owners and drivers to obtain no-fault coverage. PIP coverage of \$10,000, along with property damage coverage of \$10,000, are the only insurance coverages required for all Florida drivers at the time of vehicle registration. In addition, the Financial Responsibility Law requires all Florida drivers at fault in an accident to be accountable for bodily injuries or deaths (BI) up to \$10,000 for one person, and \$20,000 for two or more persons. BI coverage may be secured through insurance or other allowable means following an accident.

Legislators have revised PIP multiple times in the recent past in response to rampant fraud. Unfortunately, some issues still exist and fraud and abuse in the PIP system continues.

HB 19 would have addressed these issues by ending mandatory PIP coverage and replacing it with mandatory BI coverage that must be obtained prior to registering a vehicle. The bill focused on personal responsibility and proposed to end the flawed no-fault system. Under the bill, drivers would have to obtain BI coverage that covers, at a minimum, \$25,000 in damages due to bodily injury or death to one person, and \$50,000 for two or more persons. Requiring BI coverage in this manner would have brought Florida in-line with the vast majority of states.

I supported this good bill because it would have brought much needed personal responsibility and accountability to our motor vehicle insurance system and would have helped decrease premiums for Florida drivers.

## **Florida House Passed Bill to End Public Tax Dollars Going Towards Funding for Stadiums**

The Florida House passed HB 13 this session, which would have ended the practice of wasting taxpayer dollars to subsidize sports franchises on public lands, while also ensuring that these organizations were held accountable by requiring them to pay outstanding debts if they no longer used their stadiums.

Floridians take great pride in their sports teams, but I believe they should not have to see their hard-earned tax dollars fund stadium construction or renovations on public land. In Florida, 80% of professional sports franchises have facilities on public land that taxpayers subsidize to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. These deals have been financial disasters for taxpayers; for example, public dollars have financed as much as 125% of total stadium costs in four Florida cities alone.

I proudly supported this measure because I believe taxpayer dollars should be used wisely, and if these teams want to build or renovate stadiums, they should do so with private dollars.

## **House Passed Bill to Strengthen Florida's Emergency Management Laws**

The Florida House passed HB 7083 this session, which would have revised various provisions relating to the state's comprehensive emergency management plan and emergency management readiness and response in Florida that would have helped our state greatly during the next storm.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

Some of the bill's provisions would have included: extending the number of days state employees can be authorized leave during an emergency from 15 to 20 days; requiring county emergency management plans to include a fuel contingency plan and to provide detailed information on shelters; and prohibiting a public entity from holding a public meeting during a declared state of emergency while a curfew is imposed to discuss or vote on its budget. The bill also would have directed the Florida Department of Transportation, railroad industries, and fuel industries to collaborate and create a study examining options to use railroads as a means to transport and store fuel to areas impacted by a hurricane.

This bill would have ensured that our state would be properly prepared for emergencies and any minor, major, or catastrophic disaster. I supported this bill and pledge to continue to fight to keep Florida strong in times of natural disasters.

## **Florida House Voted to Protect the Sanctity of Life**

This session, the Florida House passed HB 1429, which would have prohibited dismemberment abortions.

A dilation and evacuation (D&E) abortion is a two-step process consisting of the nonsurgical dilation of the woman's cervix and the surgical evacuation of her uterus. D&Es commonly involve dismembering the fetus with forceps as part of the evacuation procedure. Usually, the fetus is alive when this dismemberment begins. The bill would have fully defined this part of the procedure, known as a dismemberment abortion, but the details may be too graphic for some readers. If you would like to view the full text of the bill it is available at: <http://bit.ly/2DsIVL4>.

HB 1429 would have made it a crime and a licensure violation for a physician to dismember a living fetus.

The bill would not prohibit D&Es; only dismemberment of a living fetus as part of that procedure. The bill would not apply to a dismemberment abortion that is necessary to save the life of a mother, provided that no other medical procedure would suffice for that purpose. The bill would have also prohibited the state from prosecuting a patient for conspiracy, when a dismemberment abortion is performed on her.

Your Florida House is committed to protecting the unborn. The destruction of a living fetus by dismemberment runs contrary to the values we hold dear. This conversation - while difficult - is one from which the Florida House will not shy away when innocent life is at stake.

## **Florida House Passed Public Assistance Reforms**

Your Florida House passed HB 751 this session, which would have addressed matters relating to public assistance, to implement new work requirements for Medicaid recipients.

The bill would have directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to seek federal approval for work requirements in the Medicaid program. New federal policy guidance indicates such a request would be approved, if state proposals focus on working age, non-pregnant, non-disabled Medicaid recipients, and take into consideration recipients who are caregivers for young children or elderly family members or who live in high unemployment areas. This bill would have aligned the Medicaid work



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

requirements with those for the food stamp and cash assistance programs, to streamline the eligibility process and take advantage of federally-funded workforce assistance.

Under the bill, if AHCA had obtained federal approval, the Legislature's approval would then have been needed to impose the new Medicaid work requirements.

Your Florida House is dedicated to passing legislation that will encourage Floridians to be partners with the state in working toward better health and self-sufficiency.

## **House Passes Bill to Crackdown on Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Government**

This session, the Florida House of Representatives passed HB 7073, which dealt with government integrity. This bill would have enhanced government integrity by implementing mechanisms to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. These mechanisms included creating a permanent, professional office within the Office of the Auditor General for the purpose of identifying, investigating, and recommending the elimination of waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement and related misconduct in government.

Additionally, the bill would have broadened Florida's Whistle-Blower Act, ensured state agencies reward employees when they report waste, fraud, and abuse and their complaints result in savings for the state, strengthened the state procurement law, and much more. The bill also would have allowed the Chief Financial Officer's office to commence a fraud investigation based on a complaint or referral from an employee of a state agency or state contractor. Furthermore, the bill prohibited state or local tax incentive funds from being used to award or pay a state contractor or subcontractor for services provided or expenditures incurred pursuant to a state contract.

We have shown our commitment to bringing the people of Florida the most effective, efficient, and transparent government possible.

## **Florida House Passed Bill to Hold Public Unions Accountable**

This session the Florida House passed HB 25, which would have reformed the annual public employee union registration renewal process to increase transparency and accountability. HB 25 would have required public employee unions to be more transparent and accountable by requiring them to report the number of employees in the bargaining unit who are eligible for representation by the union and the number of employees represented by the union who do and do not pay dues to the union. If more than 50 percent of employees eligible to participate in the union do not pay dues, the union must apply for recertification. A union that does not comply with these requirements would have its certification revoked. Unions that represent law enforcement officers, firefighters, and corrections officers were not included in the recertification changes.

I proudly voted for this bill because it would have been a positive step in increasing transparency and holding public employee unions accountable to the workers they represent.



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

## **Florida House Passed Health Care Disaster Preparedness and Response Recommendations**

Your Florida House passed HB 7085 this session, which would have addressed several health care-related recommendations from the Select Committee on Hurricane Response & Preparedness.

In September 2017, Hurricane Irma posed an unprecedented threat to the state and a severe test of existing emergency preparedness and response protocols. Testimony in the select committee revealed that some nursing homes, assisted living facilities, home health agencies, nurse registries, and other entities caring for Florida's most vulnerable populations were not fully prepared for a disaster.

The bill would have addressed special needs shelters and registry; health care facility inspections, penalties, and emergency management planning; emergency management planning by home health agencies and nurse registries; services for individuals with developmental disabilities; emergency curfews; and new requirements for the Agency for Health Care Administration and the Department of Health. The full text of the bill it is available at <http://bit.ly/2EYb7Gq>.

Your Florida House strongly supports legislative efforts to prepare our state for the next hurricane.

## **Florida House Passed Bill to Repeal Red Light Cameras**

This session, the Florida House passed HB 6001, which would have repealed the authorization for the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles and local governments to install and maintain red light cameras. Local governments would no longer have had the authority to implement red light camera programs by local ordinance. The legislation followed a review of the 2016-2017 Red Light Camera Summary Report, which showed an *increase* in total crashes and injuries at intersections with red light cameras.

I supported the repeal. Although the intent behind red light cameras may be positive, the data shows they do not work.

## **Florida House Passed Bill Addressing Self-Sufficiency**

Your Florida House passed an important pro-family bill that would have made changes to Florida's Temporary Cash Assistance Program (TCA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to encourage families to be self-sufficient: HB 693.

About 3.3 million Floridians currently receive food assistance through SNAP. HB 693 would have ended a change to SNAP made in 2010 during the devastating economic downturn. That change would have helped more people qualify for food assistance in that tough time. Fortunately, our economy has improved since then— for example, the state's unemployment rate has fallen from 11.4% to 3.9%.

Under the bill, the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) would have sought federal approval to implement a resource limit of \$5,000 in counted assets. The bill would have also required DCF to verify



# HOUSE MAJORITY OFFICE

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



REPRESENTATIVE RAY RODRIGUES, MAJORITY LEADER

assets to prevent errors and fraud. The resource limit and verification would have helped ensure that assistance goes to those who are truly in need.

The bill would have also created pilot programs at three or more regional workforce boards to increase employment opportunities for TCA recipients who face significant barriers to employment. Creating these pilot programs would have helped TCA recipients become “work ready” and support their families.

Your Florida House believes encouraging families to be self-sufficient is something we can all get behind, and that is exactly what this bill would have done.