



136 S. Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Phone: (850) 521-1200
Fax: (850) 521-1203

www.floridachamber.com

February 23, 2018 (Hand Delivered: 9 a.m.)

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor, State of Florida
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Joe Negron
President, Florida Senate
305 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

The Honorable Richard Corcoran
Speaker, Florida House of Representatives
420 Capitol
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Safety, Common Sense and Securing Florida's Quality of Life

Dear Governor Scott, President Negron, Speaker Corcoran:

Last fall, two months before the start of the 2018 Legislative Session, the Florida Chamber of Commerce put forward legislative recommendations designed to make Florida more competitive. The 2018 Jobs Agenda is a roadmap to continue strengthening Florida's economy, spur smart growth, and create good jobs and economic opportunity for everyone.

And, while those priorities will need and deserve attention in the future, the truth is, nothing on Florida's business agenda matters if Florida, in this new world we live in, is not doing what is needed to protect our children, and to provide them a safe place to learn, explore and grow. In the days since the Parkland tragedy, I've heard from business and local chamber leaders throughout Florida – each expressing concern, and urging us to unite for reasoned and positive action while balancing individual freedoms and security of our children.

In many ways, Florida is moving in the right direction. As the third largest state, Florida is creating one in every 10 new jobs in America. More than 21 million people from all walks of life call Florida home, and more than 112 million visit our great state. Florida will become a \$1 trillion economy this year, and employers will create more than 180,000 jobs in 2018 – outpacing the U.S. economy in job growth for the eighth year in a row.

As you know, the bookends of the Florida Chamber's Six Pillars for economic prosperity are **education** and **quality of life**. From championing the talent developed in our education system, to protecting Florida's family-friendly brand, we've made it our business to ensure today's

Securing Florida's Future

learners become tomorrow's earners, and that Florida is the best place to live, work, learn, raise a family and pursue the American dream.

Business and local chamber leaders throughout Florida encourage you to ensure Florida has the procedures and laws in place to give our children, as well as their parents, the assurances they need to learn. Frankly, nothing else matters. As parents, we also recognize that, but for the grace of God, it could have been our children.

What unites us is far greater than what divides us. From picking up the pieces after Hurricanes Andrew and Irma, to uniting after the Pulse and Parkland massacres, there are many things that make Florida a national leader.

Our character is being tested yet again as voters throughout America are waiting for politicians to put partisanship aside, and put Americans first. Right now, Florida has an opportunity to set a national example to balance quality of life, safety, and important constitutional rights.

On behalf of employers throughout Florida, I encourage you to show our residents, employers and the nation that Florida leads regardless of the political consequences.

If members of the Florida Legislature do the right thing for our schools, for our future, and they lose an election because of it, that's one of the most honorable things an elected leader could do. I believe Floridians will reward you for putting the long-term best interest of Florida ahead of short-term political fixes. I believe your actions, can begin to restore unity in a nation where so much polarization keeps good people from agreeing on smart reforms.

Business and local chamber leaders, united with the Florida Chamber, respectfully encourage you to pursue the following guiding principles to better protect our most precious resources – our children and families.

1. Expanding mental health services, improving background checks, and empowering law enforcement with the tools they need to keep our young learners safe.
2. Hardening schools and increasing School Resource Officer staffing.
3. Increasing the age to purchase certain long guns to 21 years of age.
4. Ensuring accessories to convert semi-automatic guns to fully automatic status are illegal.

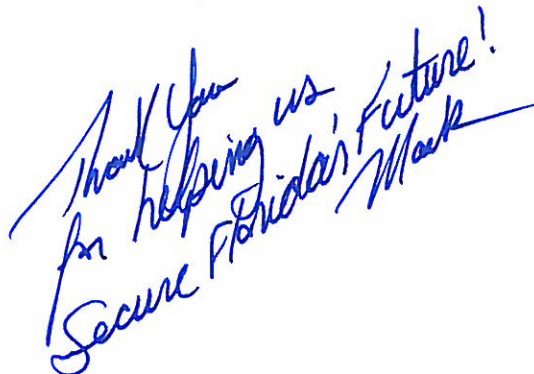
Additionally, toward your consideration of the guiding principles toward new or revised policies, we request your support include appropriate investments to ensure immediate implementation.

On behalf of Florida's leading employers, the Florida Chamber encourages you to take action – sacrifice the day-to-day details of legislative activities and secure Florida's future by putting the safety of our students, Florida's global brand, individual freedoms, and the future of our diverse state first. Our hearts and prayers remain with the families and victims of the Parkland tragedy, and in the meantime, we encourage putting security, common sense, and the Florida's quality of life first.

My best,



Mark Wilson
President & CEO



Securing Florida's Future