



Moving Florida Forward



2021

FLORIDA
CHAMBER
of Commerce

Where We Stand

The Florida Chamber's
Jobs and Competiveness Agenda

Open Letter to Florida's Business Leaders

Florida Chamber Members and Friends of Free Enterprise:

While the COVID-19 global pandemic has temporarily diverted our course, our mission remains focused on securing Florida's future, and it is more important now than ever.

As we relaunch and reimagine Florida, the Florida Chamber of Commerce is uniting Florida's business community for good, fighting for economic opportunities and growing private-sector jobs. We're standing on the front lines to solve issues that impact Florida's competitiveness, as well as the future of Florida's business climate.

Our more than 100-year track record of fighting for free enterprise is second to none, and with leadership from Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida's momentum is moving in the right direction as we aim to move Florida's economy from the 17th largest in the world to the 10th.

The 2021 Legislative Session may look slightly different this year, but we know the choices made matter, and the Florida Chamber is at the forefront as we prepare for Florida's continued growth. The Florida Chamber's Business Agenda is a set of priorities that will help grow private sector jobs, diversify our economy, and create additional economic opportunity.

We look forward to continuing to work with Governor Ron DeSantis, Senate President Wilton Simpson, House Speaker Chris Sprowls, the Florida Cabinet, the Florida Legislature, agency leaders in Tallahassee and Washington, D.C., our congressional delegation, and YOU to make sure the right things happen in Florida.

Sincerely,



Charles S. Caulkins
2019-2021 Chair
Florida Chamber of Commerce



Mark Wilson
President and CEO
Florida Chamber of Commerce



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2019-2021 Chair
Florida Chamber of Commerce



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President and CEO
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Free Enterprise Isn't Free

There has been more change in the last year than during any other time in recent memory, but one thing remains the same. The Florida 2030 Blueprint goals have not changed, and we must keep forging a path forward.

While our approach may look slightly different, we are still putting the long-term ahead of the short-term. Our strategy to reach the 2030 goals and grow Florida's economy from the 17th largest in the world to the 10th largest by 2030 is still our true North and we will only get there by uniting Florida's business community.

The Florida Chamber and its members champion free enterprise every day. But free enterprise isn't free. Unfortunately, there are a lot of forces wanting us to be like New York, California and Illinois. We can all agree that with businesses fleeing high-cost states and finding their way to the sunshine state to do business, we must work to make sure Florida remains Florida as we relaunch our economy back to pre-COVID numbers and beyond.

Our climate gives Florida an opportunity to attract these businesses and jobs to our state to help jump start our economy. Florida remains open for business and we are serving as a model for the nation.

There are an additional 4 million residents expected by 2030, and there is \$1.2 million in wealth relocating to our state every hour. With Florida's growing population and economy, top 5 education system, second in the nation ranking for fiscal stability, lack of state income tax, top infrastructure thanks to six straight years of \$10B in state transportation and infrastructure funding, close access to the Panama Canal offering a gateway to emerging markets, and low cost of living offering a great quality of life; major employers are relocating their businesses to the Sunshine State.

#FLOpen4Biz



*While states like New York, California and Illinois continue to stifle their economies with endless shutdowns and unrealistic restrictions, the Florida Chamber launched the **Florida Open for Business** campaign. See why employers are calling Florida home at:*

FLCHAMBER.COM/OPEN4BIZ

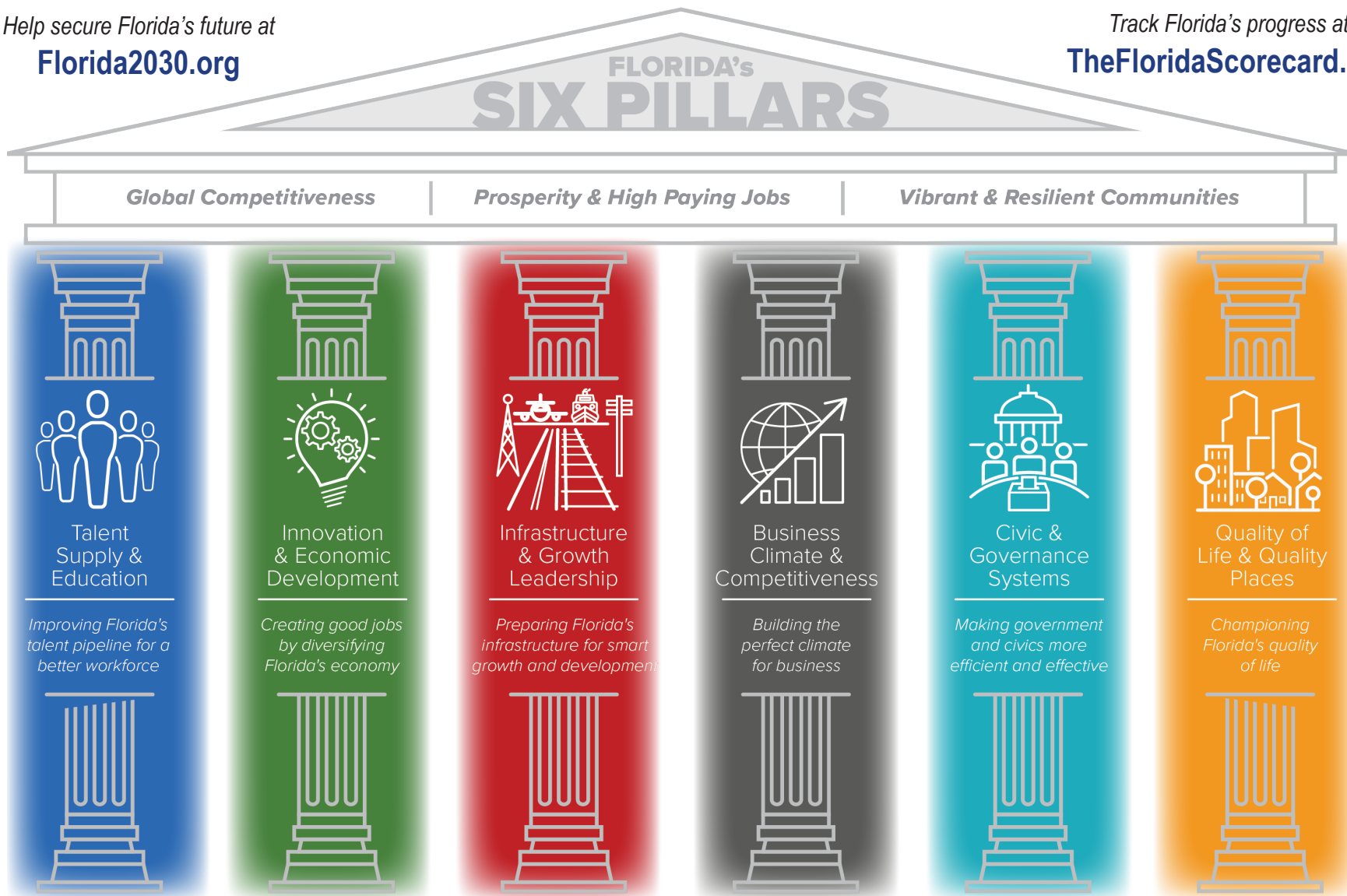


Florida's Six Pillars

By 2030, Florida will be home to 26 million residents and one of the most diverse populations in the world. The Florida Chamber, with the research done by the Florida Chamber Foundation, has identified the six areas (pillars) that will grow Florida to the 10th largest economy in the world by 2030.

Help secure Florida's future at
Florida2030.org

Track Florida's progress at
TheFloridaScorecard.org



Improving Florida's Talent Pipeline for a Better Workforce

LEARNERS TO EARNERS: PREPARING FLORIDA'S YOUNGEST STUDENTS WITH QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Florida's future workforce are today's early learners. Early childhood education is essential for a child's development and the Florida Chamber will continue to support the improvement of the quality, quantity, and efficacy of talent development for Florida students. Preparing our youngest students to learn provides a foundation for future successes and helps them develop important skills such as self-discipline, persistence, critical thinking and cooperation - skills that are essential to their future success and a quality workforce.

The Florida Chamber Supports:

- 100% of children being ready for kindergarten by 2030, up from 53%. To view your County's current score, visit **TheFloridaScorecard.org**.
- Both innovative and traditional forms of education that help ensure an efficient and effective early learning system.
- Student connectivity to high-speed internet and the learning opportunities it affords.
- Expanding the availability of high-quality child care options.
- Focusing targeted resources in the 15% of Florida zip codes where more than half of Florida children live in poverty.



“ If we don't focus on our childcare industry and our early childhood system today, it will be very difficult for Florida's economy to come back. The Florida Chamber of Commerce coming to the table on early childhood is probably the most significant thing that has happened in early childhood in our state. ”

Representative Vance Aloupis
Florida House District 115
CEO, The Children's
Movement of Florida

SETTING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR FLORIDA STUDENTS: K-12 TALENT DEVELOPMENT



Florida Commissioner of Education **Richard Corcoran** addresses Florida's business leaders at the 2020 Virtual Future of Florida Forum.

A rigorous, high-quality primary education system is fundamental to ensuring all Florida students have the opportunity to find their own pathway to prosperity. The Florida Chamber supports both traditional in-class instruction as well as distance and innovative instruction. Additionally, we must continue to ensure every parent has the opportunity to send their student to the academic institution that best fits their child's individual needs.

The Florida Chamber Supports:

- Ensuring that 95% of entering high school students graduate within 4 years by 2030.
- Efforts to meet the 2030 goal of 100% of Florida 3rd and 8th Graders reading and performing math at or above grade level.
- The non-academic benefits of our schools as they provide services and experiences that are critical to the well-being of students and their families. Benefits such as nutrition, socialization, counseling, extra-curricular activities and learned life skills all play a part to ensure the quality and continuity of the educational process.
- Appropriate assessments and accountability systems based on high standards that will help enable Florida's K-12 system to be academically competitive with other states and around the world.
- Student connectivity to high-speed internet and the learning opportunities it affords.

“

If you get education right, it is everything. Not only do you change the hearts and souls and minds of children and the direction of our state, but you do so for our entire nation.”

*Florida Commissioner of Education
Richard Corcoran*

TOP OF THE CLASS: HIGHER EDUCATION & FLORIDA'S FUTURE TALENT PIPELINE

In 2020, the U.S. News & World Report affirmed that Florida has the best state Higher Education system for the third year in a row. Florida, home to three colleges that rank among the 100 Best Colleges nationally, also has some of the most affordable 4-year post-secondary degrees in the country. In order to ensure Florida remains at the top of higher education systems nationally, the Florida Chamber continues to support public policy that develops innovation, improves transparency and includes private sector partners to align degrees with industry needs to remain competitive in the 21st century global economy.

The Florida Chamber Supports:

- Increasing post-secondary attainment among diverse populations and among those individuals who may be underserved or underrepresented in higher education.
- Funding public colleges and universities based upon appropriate performance outcomes, while still providing needed certainty for long-term investment.
- Innovative cost-effective tuition policies that incentivize students to choose an in-demand degree and to complete it on time.



Marshall Criser III, *Chancellor of the State University System of Florida and Past Chairman of the Florida Chamber Board of Directors.*

CREATING AMERICA'S BEST WORKFORCE



This mission propels us to think broadly about Florida's talent supply and Florida's workforce development systems. It encourages us to think bigger; to think, what if we thought not just about the first job for a job seeker, but an entire career pathway. ”

Michelle Dennard
President and CEO,
CareerSource Florida

Florida is a national leader in producing a talented, market ready, workforce. However, in order to bridge the talent gap and ensure at least 80% of Florida's workforce has essential employability skills by 2030, we will need to continue to innovate creatively and unite Florida's business community to promote development synergy. Additionally, we must continue to support adoption of a data-driven approach to meeting Florida's needs for the 21st century.

The Florida Chamber Supports:

- At least 80% of Florida's workforce having essential employability skills by 2030.
- Efforts to ensure that greater than 60% of Floridians aged 25-64 have a high-value post-secondary certification, degree or training by 2030.
- Training and retraining programs aligned with the needs of employers based on accurate and timely local labor market data.
- Employer-led earn and learn opportunities, including apprenticeships.
- Incentivizing more effective and efficient partnerships between education and workforce systems.
- Educational programs such as rapid credentialing designed to provide an accelerated journey towards prosperity. The Florida Chamber further supports allowing students to complete technical certificates, industry certifications or other credentials of value in a short amount of time that will give them a competitive edge in securing a high-wage job.
- The work of the Talent Development Council (TDC). The TDC, on which the Florida Chamber has a statutorily reserved seat, is a statutorily defined council that is run by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity and is tasked with creating a strategic plan to ensure 60% of working-age Floridians hold a high-value post-secondary credential by 2030.

Creating Quality Jobs By Diversifying Florida's Economy

OPEN FOR BUSINESS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & DIVERSIFYING FLORIDA'S ECONOMY

To grow Florida into a top 10 global economy, the Florida Chamber supports diversifying Florida's economy through the attraction of businesses in targeted industries and emerging technology sectors. Because Florida is routinely in competition with other states and nations to attract and retain these types of businesses, the Florida Chamber believes the state must take a proactive, aggressive approach in attracting jobs and new businesses to our state. Therefore, the Florida Chamber supports an aggressive branding campaign along with initiatives that support the creation of high-skill, high-wage jobs and/or make significant capital investments in our state. Rural communities are vital and should be included in the state's economic development efforts and the Florida Chamber supports incentivizing business development and investing in infrastructure in these areas. This will also support the Florida 2030 Blueprint goal of doubling the share of Florida gross domestic product in rural counties.

Opportunities to diversify Florida's economy include:

- Consistently and aggressively marketing Florida's brand as a business-friendly state in both domestic and international markets. Many competitor states spend tens of millions of dollars annually promoting their state's business environment and economic development programs in addition to state sponsored incentives which they also provide.
- Investing in programs like Enterprise Florida and the economic development toolkit to attract and retain high-skill, high-wage jobs and investments in Florida. Again, this is vital if we are to compete for key jobs.
- Reauthorizing the Qualified Targeted Industry Tax Refund program or creating and funding a similar program that rewards job creation and capital investment by businesses relocating or expanding in Florida.
- Increasing funding to the state Research & Development Tax Credit so more qualified companies can participate.
- Supporting programs and projects that will further diversify Florida's economy and attract industry clusters, such as the film incentive or the data center sales tax exemption.
- Investing in workforce development and infrastructure projects, including the promotion of broadband in rural areas, to continue to make Florida an attractive place to invest.



*(Left to Right) Executive Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity **Dane Eagle**, moderates a panel on diversifying and growing Florida's economy with Senior Director of Economic Development at Florida Power & Light Company **Crystal Stiles**, Florida Secretary of Commerce and President & CEO of Enterprise Florida **Jamal Sowell** and Director of Economic Development for Duke Energy **Marc Hoenstine**, at the 2021 Virtual Economic Outlook & Jobs Solution Summit.*

FLORIDA IS MADE FOR TRADE

The Florida Chamber has led the effort to increase international trade, increase the number of exports and increase foreign direct investment by releasing recommendations and goals in the Florida Trade & Logistics Study and the Florida 2030 Blueprint. In order to double goods exports and triple services exports by 2030, the Florida Chamber supports increases to Enterprise Florida's international budget, strengthening Florida's manufacturing sector, and focusing the attention of state policy makers on the importance of international trade, manufacturing and its supply chain. Additionally, Florida has an opportunity to benefit from reshoring activities with the current disruption of the supply chain and international tensions as a result of COVID-19.

Opportunities to strengthen international trade include:

- Maintaining and expanding investments in Florida's ports, airports, spaceports and intermodal logistics centers.
- Strengthening manufacturing in Florida by improving the talent pipeline, relieving regulatory and financial burdens, and providing support services for small and medium-sized manufacturers.
- Increasing the annual allocation for the state Research & Development Tax Credit so additional employers may qualify.
- Increasing funding to Enterprise Florida's international mission, including its export diversification and expansion programs.
- Reauthorizing the Qualified Targeted Industry Tax Refund program, or the creation and funding of a similar program, to attract high-wage, high-skill jobs to the state, including manufacturing.
- Examining policies that will attract multinational businesses and supply chains to Florida as companies look to return operations to the United States.



“Over the last decade the State of Florida has made significant investments in Florida seaports. These investments have laid the foundation to attract distribution and fulfillment centers and new manufacturing to Florida. Now is the time to take advantage of these new opportunities and bring new jobs to communities in the state of Florida.”

Eric Green
CEO, JAXPORT and member of the Florida Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors to Florida's business leaders during the 2020 Virtual Transportation, Growth & Infrastructure Solution Summit.

CAPITAL & INVESTMENTS: FLORIDA'S IMPORTANT START-UP STORY

Small businesses are the backbone of Florida's economy, supporting close to half of the state's \$1.11 trillion economy. Access to capital, a quality workforce and government regulations are perennial top issues of concern for small businesses. To be the #1 state for business start-ups by 2030, the Florida Chamber will support state and federal measures that will help accelerate growth opportunities for Florida small businesses.

Additionally, Florida lags behind other large states in venture capital investment, an essential engine for economic growth, and our Florida 2030 Blueprint goal is to be a top 3 state for venture capital investments by 2030. The Florida Chamber supports efforts that will increase Florida's share in receiving venture capital dollars and improves the number of start-ups.

Opportunities to increase Florida-based capital and investments include:

- Making permanent the documentary tax exemption for emergency small business loans. A similar exemption is already allowed under state statute for the state emergency bridge loan program and this would extend the exemption to federal emergency loans.
- Increasing funding for the Florida Small Business Development Center Network, which provides business development assistance, disaster recovery and business counseling to small and medium-sized businesses.
- Maintaining Enterprise Florida's role in assisting small businesses.
- Supporting the infrastructure that allows businesses to access equity capital.
- Supporting changes to the state's lending programs, such as the Microfinance Loan program, to encourage additional lenders and allow more small businesses to participate.



Source: *TheFloridaScorecard.org*

“Entrepreneurs and small business are the foundation of Florida’s economy...creating jobs, encouraging innovation and generating diverse opportunities in every community. The Florida Chamber, as THE voice for Florida Business, places particular emphasis on our state’s small business needs and supports initiatives to sustain their healthy future. ”

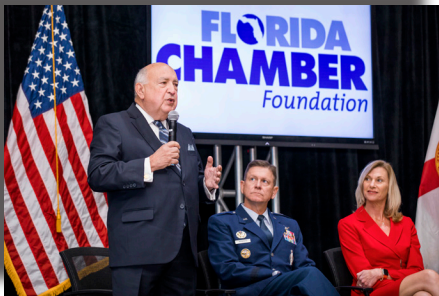
Glenda Hood
*Founding Partner, triSect
and Chair of the Florida Chamber
Small Business Council*

#LOVEFL: PROMOTING FLORIDA'S TOURISM BRAND

Tourism is one of Florida's most important and foundational industries and the industry has been severely impacted by limitations on interstate and international travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, every 81 visitors supported one Florida job, and out-of-state visitors added over \$94 billion yearly to the state's economy. More than \$6 billion of total state sales tax collections have come from tourists annually, and it is estimated that Florida households save \$1,512 a year on state and local taxes because of the 131.4 million plus visitors to the state each year. VISIT FLORIDA, the state's tourism marketing arm led by Dana Young, plays a significant role in attracting visitors, branding the state as a tourist destination and signaling that the state is open for business after events like hurricanes. For every \$1 taxpayers invest in VISIT FLORIDA, there is an estimated \$3.27 return on investment to Florida's taxpayers. For these reasons, the Florida Chamber fully supports VISIT FLORIDA and believes the state should continue to invest in its mission.



Dana Young, President & CEO of VISIT FLORIDA, discusses the #LoveFL campaign at the 2020 Virtual Future of Florida Forum.



Frank DiBello, President & CEO, Space Florida

A LAUNCHPAD FOR FLORIDA'S FUTURE: MILITARY, DEFENSE, SPACE & AEROSPACE

Florida is uniquely situated by being surrounded by water, an advantage that has allowed our military, defense, space and aerospace industries to flourish. With 20 military bases, 3 combatant command centers, and 2 spaceports, the Florida Chamber recognizes that these industries have a significant impact to Florida's economy and in our ability to recognize our goal of growing our economy to be top 10 in the world.

Opportunities to further improve these key industries include:

- Supporting measures that will grow a skilled space, aerospace and defense workforce, including promoting STEMM education and improving Florida's talent pipeline.
- Encouraging investments in technological advancements in both civil and commercial space exploration.
- Reauthorizing the Qualified Targeted Tax Refund program to continue to attract these high-wage, high-skill industries.
- Protecting Florida's military and space assets from encroachment.
- Continuing to fully fund Enterprise Florida and Space Florida.

Improving Florida's Infrastructure for Smart Growth and Development

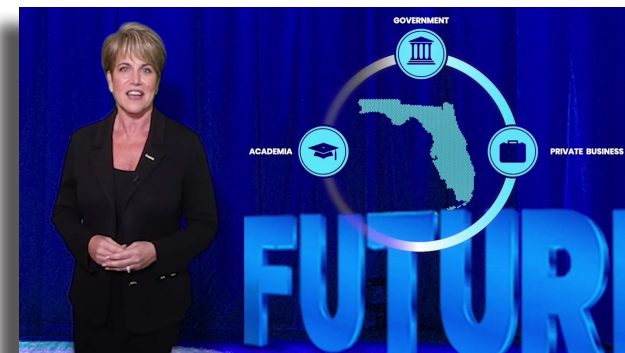
TRANSPORTATION: MOVING MILLIONS MORE PEOPLE AND GOODS

As Florida continues to grow both in population and in productivity in the years ahead, the Florida Chamber will continue to fight for a robust, safe, resilient, and modern transportation system that responds to the latest technologies and uses the best data available. For years, local and state governments have prioritized our infrastructure system which ranks among the best in the nation. However, new growth with millions more drivers on the road by 2030 and millions more goods being delivered requires forward-thinking investments in our logistics and transportation system. The Florida Chamber supports a wide range of mobility options – from walkable communities to shared vehicles to passenger rail – to move Floridians around the state they call home.

The Florida Chamber supports:

- Investing in our roadways, railways, airports, seaports, and spaceports to accommodate growth in demand for trade, talent, and visitors.
- Leading in the research and deployment of new transportation technologies, such as autonomous and electric vehicles, through impactful coalitions like Autonomous Florida and our partners.
- Linking our rural communities to the urban economic drivers of the state, through multimodal opportunities like the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance Program known as M-CORES.
- Minimizing regulatory roadblocks on all infrastructure projects to lower costs and increase efficiency.
- Reducing congestion through funding, pricing, or better data sharing.
- Linking Florida's trade and visitor gateways to inland corridors to enable efficient global supply chains and delivery networks.

The Florida Chamber of Commerce opposes any raids on the Transportation Trust Fund.



Beth Kigel, Vice President/Director of Smart & Connected Solutions for HNTB Corporation, Chair of Autonomous Florida and member of the Florida Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, discusses how Florida is poised to be the autonomous capital of the world at the **2020 Virtual Future of Florida Forum**.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS: CONNECTING FLORIDA WITH THE WORLD

With the modern economy becoming increasingly more connected and digital, the Florida Chamber will continue to support private sector solutions that increase connectivity and improve access to high-speed internet. To keep Florida competitive and increase economic and learning opportunities for all Floridians, policymakers need to prioritize access of digital infrastructure in our education system. Florida also must continue to invest in rural connections so that every part of our state has access to the same online opportunities – the inequity of opportunity of which was further exposed by the demands of remote work and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a pro-growth, pro-digital regulatory environment and private sector innovation, Florida can continue to lead in telecommunications and the 21st century economy.

The Florida Chamber supports:

- Creating and maintaining uniform rules and processes for competition and the deployment of the latest digital infrastructure, like small cells, to increase their affordability and use.
- Improving digital infrastructure in our schools so that every child has access to the learning opportunities that come with high-speed connections, regardless of their zip code or economic situation.
- Partnering with other new infrastructure investments for improved right-of-way access, like through the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance Program known as M-CORES.
- Lowering the cost of being connected by reducing the state and local Communications Service Tax, which is close to double the state sales tax and is the 13th highest in the country.
- Leveraging connectivity and big data in transportation decision-making, and in the research and deployment of new transportation technologies, such as autonomous and connected vehicles, through impactful coalitions like Autonomous Florida.



Joe York, President of AT&T Florida and member of the Florida Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, addresses business leaders at a Florida Chamber Foundation Transportation, Growth & Infrastructure Solution Summit.

ATTAINABLE HOUSING: MAKING SURE FLORIDIANS CAN AFFORD FLORIDA

The Florida Chamber believes that affordable workforce housing is an often-overlooked issue for Florida's competitiveness. Throughout our research for the 2030 Project, the Florida Chamber heard the concern from business leaders across Florida that workforce housing was becoming too expensive for the talent they were seeking to attract and too difficult to build at the speed with which they were seeking to grow inside our state. The Florida Chamber supports an "all-of-the-above" strategy for increasing the supply of housing at all levels, types, and price points to keep Florida's housing options attainable for working Floridians. Many well-meaning restrictions and regulations artificially constrain the supply of new housing. For example, too many communities have unnecessarily burdensome zoning restrictions like minimum parking space requirements that reduce the ability for businesses to build workforce housing on otherwise appropriate property.

The Florida Chamber supports:

- Reducing unnecessary regulations and red tape at the local level so that new construction can be permitted, built, and filled to meet demand.
- Fully funding the Sadowski Trust Fund for affordable housing in communities across Florida.
- Fixing our nation's broken immigration system at the federal level to have more targeted trade workers in our economy.
- Embracing new technologies, materials, and building innovations for more affordable, resilient, and sustainable housing options.
- Making it easier to build new communities from the ground up through innovative tools like special districts and conservation easements.
- Increasing two-way international trade to reduce the cost of bulk materials like the lumber needed for roofs.



“Attainable housing does not mean below market price housing. We want the markets and the private sector to lead in this area. We need to reduce the regulatory red tape for new home construction and make it easier to repurpose existing structures. ”

***Florida Senator and former Florida
Chamber Most Valuable Legislator
Kathleen Passidomo
District 28***

ENVIRONMENT AFFAIRS AND SUSTAINABILITY: GROWING RESPONSIBLY WHILE PROTECTING FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Noah Valenstein,
*Secretary of the
Florida Department of
Environmental Protection,*
*discusses Florida's water
needs at the 2020 Virtual
Transportation Growth
& Infrastructure Solution
Summit.*

The Florida Chamber believes that a thriving environment and a resilient economy are inextricably intertwined and are essential to securing Florida's future. Protecting Florida's unique ecology is essential for our tourists, businesses, and residents. The Florida Chamber will continue fighting for septic-to-sewer conversions, Basin Management Action Plans, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, and many other important environmental projects that will help Floridians to be better stewards of the land. To pay for the many environmental programs needed to sustain this quality of life, our businesses must be able to responsibly do business and our communities must be able to responsibly grow. Permitting processes for new projects should be science-based, certain, and predictable so businesses can know where and how they can build for the next generation of Floridians. Our agricultural sector, the original foundation of our economy which is increasingly diversifying with its growth, needs to be supported and continuously leveraged as a partner. Finally, Florida needs to prepare for sea level rise through smarter planning and targeted infrastructure investments.

The Florida Chamber supports:

- Science-based policies for water, land use, energy, and growth that prioritize the long term over the short term.
- Water and environmental projects to improve our natural resources, like septic-to-sewer conversions, Basin Management Action Plans, and the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.
- Streamlining permitting processes that are science-based, certain, and predictable, such as the state's assumption of the federal 404 permitting process.
- Incentivizing capital investments in alternative and wastewater infrastructure systems.

The Florida Chamber opposes:

- Frivolous environmental litigation with the goal of delaying lawful projects, including the so-called "rights of nature" movement which seeks to push environmental policymaking solely into the courts.
- Any undue federal intrusion into Florida's unique environmental system.

Building the Perfect Climate for Business

LAWSUIT ABUSE REFORM: FIXING FLORIDA'S BROKEN LEGAL SYSTEM

According to the latest reputable national report, Florida's bottom-five legal climate is costing Florida families an additional \$4,442 a year in increased costs on everything from the price of a gallon of milk to the cost of auto insurance. This also impacts business decisions, including where a company locates or decides to do business. In response, the Florida Chamber has set a goal to improve Florida's legal climate from the 46th worst to the top 12 in the country by 2030. In order to do this, the Florida Chamber, in partnership with the Florida Chamber's Litigation and Regulatory Reform Center, will work with the Florida Justice Reform Institute, the U.S. Chamber's Institute for Legal Reform, the legislature, the judiciary and others to reduce unnecessary litigation, reduce costs and prevent additional causes of action in Florida law. Florida voters want politicians to put voters and local businesses above billboard trial lawyers and special interests.

Opportunities to improve Florida's legal climate include:

- Providing businesses the certainty they need to fully reopen their doors by passing COVID-19 liability protections for employers that are attempting to follow safety guidelines to keep employees and customers safe. This is an essential step for the economy to rebound quickly and fully after the pandemic-created recession.
- Addressing inflated medical damages by allowing the jury to see the amount generally paid for medical services and curbing abuses surrounding letters of protection. These inflated health care costs drive up the cost for future medical damages and non-economic damages when the actual expenses are much lower.
- Eliminating Florida's reputation as a haven for "bad faith" insurance lawsuits by passing meaningful bad faith reforms.
- Returning the use of the contingency fee multiplier in insurance cases to only "rare and exceptional" circumstances.
- Requiring transparency when third-party financiers or hedge funds are financing litigation.
- Cracking down on misleading drug and medical device advertising by trial lawyers, who often use scare tactics to convince patients to quit taking medically necessary prescriptions and encourage litigation.
- Reining in municipal litigation on broad public policy issues. Plaintiffs lawyers are using cities and counties to file lawsuits on a contingency fee basis with the promise of increased revenue to the municipality. This undermines the authority of the legislature and the attorney general and hurts legitimate plaintiffs by reducing the amount of funds available.



Florida Senator Jeff Brandes





*Billboard Trial Lawyers
are holding Florida back.*

“Florida has the fifth-worst legal climate in America and the last thing we need are a tsunami of frivolous COVID lawsuits as we seek to relaunch Florida’s economy.”

Mark Wilson
Florida Chamber President & CEO

CALL TO ACTION

A big part of successfully relaunching our economy is making sure that the personal injury trial lawyers cannot hold back the full relaunch of Florida’s economy with their inevitable, frivolous and unfair targeting of Florida’s local businesses. Common sense COVID liability protections have remained a top priority of the Florida Chamber. Tell your legislators to support **HB 7** and **SB 72** by visiting:

FLChamber.com/COVIDLiabilityProtections



INSURING FLORIDA'S FUTURE, THE RIGHT WAY

The Florida Chamber supports efforts to create a competitive and stable private insurance market and believes that rates should be appropriately based on risk and be actuarially sound and never on what's politically popular. Cost drivers in the homeowners' insurance marketplace, such as frivolous litigation, are driving up homeowners' insurance rates between 20-40 percent, an amount that is unsustainable for the future of our state. Significant reforms are necessary to stem the current amount of expensive and unnecessary litigation that is increasing property insurance rates for everyone. The Florida Chamber will continue to support competitive rates for workers' compensation insurance and automobile insurance and will support opportunities to reduce the amount of unnecessary litigation in these systems.

Opportunities to create a competitive and stable insurance market include:

- Supporting policies that reduce the need for assessments on homeowners' and business' insurance policies, like actuarially sound rates for Citizens Property Insurance Corporation, which is unfortunately growing again.
- Transferring risk from the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund to private sector markets.
- Disincentivizing frivolous litigation through changes to the one-way attorney fee statute.
- Returning the use of the contingency fee multiplier to only "rare and exceptional" circumstances.
- Meaningful reforms to address third-party bad faith, a significant cost driver on automobile insurance.
- Addressing the Castellanos Florida Supreme Court decision to mitigate the ridiculous amount of claimant attorney fees in Florida's workers' comp system.

We will continue fighting efforts that will increase insurance rates due to increased litigation or increased costs.



Florida Office of Insurance Regulation (FOIR) Commissioner David Altmaier, addressed Florida insurance providers during the Florida Chamber 2020 Virtual Insurance Summit. He was joined by FOIR Deputy Commissioner Susanne Murphy (right) and Joy Ryan (left) of Meenan Law Firm.



Charles S. Caulkins, Partner at Fisher Phillips and Florida Chamber of Commerce 2019-2021 Chairman of the Board, displays the **Florida 2030 Blueprint to Securing Florida's Future**.

Learn more at:
Florida2030.org

A FAIR AND FREE FLORIDA: WORKPLACE & EMPLOYMENT LAW

In order to grow Florida's economy, the Florida Chamber believes in a robust free enterprise system with limited intrusion by government in the marketplace. However, we also recognize the importance of Florida employers providing workplaces free of discrimination. In this regard, the Florida Chamber supports state laws that ensure a fair resolution of employment discrimination complaints in a timely fashion. The current federal and state statutes, case law and regulations prohibiting employment discrimination provide sufficient protections to Florida employees' rights to equal employment opportunity. Additionally, the Florida Chamber will oppose unnecessary new mandates related to employment practices and will zealously guard the employer-employee relationship from governmental interference.

Opportunities to improve Florida's workplace laws and champion the employee/employer relationship include:

- Preempting conditions of employment, such as scheduling requirements and hiring requirements, to avoid a patchwork of regulations at the local level. This becomes even more important as the state begins to implement the first in the country \$15/hour constitutionally mandated minimum wage.
- Opposing governmental actions that are detrimental to businesses and interfere in the employer-employee relationship.
- Protecting an employer's ability to maintain a Drug Free Workplace, including existing and necessary liability protections that arise from maintaining a Drug Free Workplace.
- Protecting employers' ability to maintain safe workplaces and screen employees for COVID-19 while also protecting individual employee privacy concerns.
- Clarifying the employment relationship and strengthening independent contractor laws.
- Minimizing litigation by aligning the Florida Civil Rights Act to federal standards.

TAXATION: PURSUING AMERICA'S #1 TAX CLIMATE

As Florida fights to become the #1 Tax Climate in the country by 2030 (currently #4), the Florida Chamber of Commerce supports competitiveness and equity in Florida's tax system and reducing taxes that put Florida at a disadvantage compared to other states and nations.

Opportunities to improve Florida's tax competitiveness include:

- Continued reduction or full elimination of the business rent tax. Florida is the only state in America that charges a sales tax on commercial leases.
- Collection of sales tax from internet retailers that have a substantial economic nexus in Florida per the Wayfair US Supreme Court decision, ideally in a manner that is revenue neutral (e.g. by using collected revenues to pay down the business rent tax). This is not a new tax, but a tax that is already due in the State of Florida. Online sales tax collection would level the playing field between out-of-state or international companies and local, hometown businesses. Missouri and Florida are the only two states that have a sales tax and do not collect this tax.
- Reduction in the state's communications services tax (CST), which combined with local CST, is close to double the state sales tax. Florida ranks #13 highest in the country for its state and local communications services tax rate.
- Continued reductions in the corporate income tax. Currently set at 4.458 percent for the 2021 tax year, this tax will revert back to 5.5 percent beginning in the January 1, 2022 tax year. Opportunities for reductions include making the reduction as a result of the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act permanent, increasing the \$50,000 exemption amount for net income, or allowing more companies to qualify for a single sales factor apportionment in the calculation of corporate income taxes if they are making a significant capital investment in Florida.



Source: *TheFloridaScorecard.org*



“
I look forward to continuing to work with the Florida Chamber to help Florida's businesses recover and build a better, stronger, Florida.”

*Florida Chief Financial Officer
Jimmy Patronis*

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE: KEEPING RATES LOW TO CREATE JOBS

The Florida Chamber will fight to keep the burden of unemployment compensation taxes low and competitive for Florida employers. A joint federal and state program, unemployment compensation, known as reemployment assistance in Florida, is funded through a tax that varies based on an employer's experience rating and other socialized costs, including the trust fund balance. Beginning 2021, the state's minimum tax rate is increasing from 0.10 percent to 0.29 percent. In dollar terms, minimum taxes are increasing nearly 200% from \$7 an employee to \$20.30 an employee. The maximum rate, which is set in statute, remains at 5.4 percent or \$378 an employee. This means that employers below the maximum rate are picking up more of the social costs to replenish the trust fund. The Florida Chamber believes a job is the best antidote to unemployment and that the greatest and quickest way to help those in unemployment due to the pandemic is to quickly relaunch Florida's economy and create jobs.

Opportunities to improve Florida's Unemployment Compensation system include:

- Ensuring that COVID-19 was a non-chargeable event to an employer's benefit ratio if they were impacted by the pandemic.
- Examining options to mitigate the impact of increased taxes for 2021.
- Improving the functionality of the technology for the timely payment of qualified reemployment assistance claims.



“As the nation grapples with COVID-19, many states will have to find a way to fill the holes in their state budgets as a result of declining revenue. What will set Florida apart is that, instead of raising taxes or making your responsible cuts to vital services...we will take this unprecedented opportunity to be thoughtful in our approach to minimize the size and scope of government and to get Floridians back to even a better normal, a better life.”

Speaker of the Florida House **Chris Sprowls**

Making Government and Civics More Efficient and Effective

BETTER GOVERNANCE: REGULATORY REFORM, PENSION REFORM, & IMPROVING GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

The Florida Chamber believes that governments at all levels should regulate thoughtfully, spend wisely, and respond to the needs of citizens and businesses efficiently. Through the Florida Chamber's Litigation and Regulatory Reform Center, the Florida Chamber works to identify and improve regulations or laws that unfairly or unwisely burden businesses. In some cases, the Florida Chamber seeks to provide uniformity in business regulations across the state through preemption legislation, which typically removes a specific set of local government authority that is inconsistent with a growing and sustainable economy and places it into state governance. The Florida Chamber also understands that pension obligations are promises to current public servants that often are paid for by future generations. To that end, the Florida Chamber supports targeted pension reforms that keep public debts from burdening our future, while protecting current government workers. The Florida Chamber also recognizes that governments do not always have the same incentives that private sector businesses have to adopt new technologies for greater efficiency. Therefore, the Florida Chamber supports investing in our public sector technology infrastructure to protect from cybersecurity threats, improve efficiency, and deliver better outcomes to taxpayers.

The Florida Chamber supports:

- Reducing unnecessary regulations and red tape at the local, state and federal level.
- Creating uniformity in business regulations across the 412 cities and 67 counties in Florida.
- Reforming our pension system to meet future needs without unfairly burdening future generations.
- Embracing new, cost-effective technological systems for the improved functioning of government.
- Protecting critical infrastructure and governance from 21st Century threats like cybercrime and cyberterrorism.



“The biggest eyesore that we have is the unfunded liability, the pension, approximately \$25 billion today. I hope this year will be the year that we can address that shortfall within the budget. ”

***Florida Senate President
Wilton Simpson***

PROTECTING FLORIDA'S CONSTITUTION: DEFENDING OUR GOVERNMENT FROM OUT-OF-STATE INTERESTS



Left to Right: Former Florida Chamber Chair Bob Grammig, Former Florida House Speaker Will Weatherford, Governor Ron DeSantis, Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez, Chair of the Florida Chamber Small Business Council Glenda Hood, Florida Chamber CEO Mark Wilson

“Florida’s constitution is under attack by out-of-state and special interests trying to buy their way onto Florida’s ballot. We must put Floridians back in control of Florida’s constitution, and reduce the influence of well-funded special interests that advance their own agendas at the expense of Floridians. ”

Mark Wilson
Florida Chamber President & CEO

The Florida Chamber believes that the Florida Constitution is the basis for our state’s system of government and is too easily amended by groups that live outside the geographic boundaries it governs and by special interests who want to buy their way around representative democracy. State constitutions should organize the structure of the government and protect the rights of their citizens, institutions, and businesses. While Florida’s constitution sets out a balanced and carefully organized government and protects many fundamental rights, it is also the home to many policies that should have been left to the more transparent, flexible and accountable legislative process. Unlike constitutional amendments, laws are amendable when circumstances change, policy preferences shift, or technology changes. The Florida Constitution has been amended over 140 times since 1968. The U.S. Constitution has been amended only 27 times in its history. The Florida Chamber believes that our state’s foundational document should not be used as a vehicle for policy that is unable to pass duly elected legislative bodies or be used as a tool for political turnout.

The Florida Chamber supports:

- Reasonable regulations on paid petition gatherers, recognizing that these individuals are engaged in the policymaking process just like lawyers, lobbyists, and political funders which are regulated under state law.
- More information to voters at the time of voting, so that voters are aware of the potential consequences of the proposed policy.
- A higher voting threshold for constitutional amendments because these amendments are near permanent and need to be the result of significant consensus.
- Limitations on the types of amendments that can be proposed to protect civil rights.

The Florida Chamber supports protecting our state constitution by opposing:

- Any constitutional amendment that can be lawfully accomplished via statute or the rulemaking process.

Championing Florida's Quality of Life

A HEALTHY FLORIDA: QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

The Florida Chamber promotes access to high-quality, affordable health care options for all Floridians. We continue to support improved access to meaningful cost and quality information for consumers through new innovative means including movement toward value-based outcomes in care. Additionally, we will support public policies that ensure Florida becomes one of the top 5 healthiest states by 2030.

The Florida Chamber Supports:

- Efforts to make Florida a top 5 state for overall wellbeing as outlined by the Florida Chamber Foundation's 2030 Blueprint goal.
- Market-based, innovative policies that will help control costs, increase transparency, deliver greater access and quality of care, and promote a healthier population.
- Facilitating and promoting workplace wellness and awareness programs.
- Allowing medical professionals to practice medicine to the full extent of their education and training where appropriate.
- Investment in research and development necessary for the scaled deployment of a COVID-19 vaccine to benefit the health of all Americans and our recovering economy.
- Limited liability protection for healthcare providers for damages with respect to alleged harm caused by any act or omission by a healthcare professional or related healthcare entity in the course of arranging for or providing healthcare services during the COVID-19 public health emergency period.

The Florida Chamber Opposes:

- Unnecessary regulations on telehealth while maintaining efficacy and quality.
- New burdensome or duplicative mandates that raise healthcare costs inappropriately.



Source: [TheFloridaScorecard.org](https://www.thefloridascorecard.org)



Edward Jimenez, CEO,
*University of Florida Health
Shands and member
of the Florida Chamber
of Commerce Board of
Directors.*

ENDING INEQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY AND PROVIDING A PATH TO PROSPERITY AND SELF SUFFICIENCY FOR ALL FLORIDIANS



“

It is critically important to understand that it is not the intellect, it is not the talent, it is not the ability, but sometimes the zip code that is the greatest determining factor in the success of our children and our communities. ”

Greg Haile
President, Broward College
and member of the
Florida Chamber Foundation
Board of Trustees

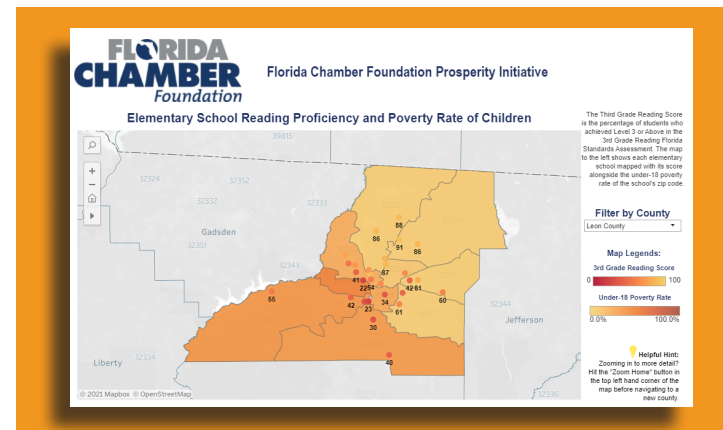
In 2019, there were 829,342 children living in poverty in Florida, and our 2030 Blueprint goal is to cut that number in half. Florida should be the best place on the planet for people who want to work. Through the Florida Chamber Foundation's Prosperity Initiative, the Florida Chamber continues to support revising eligibility policies to eliminate or greatly reduce the “cliff effect” for social services that support children and families as they work their way out of poverty. By doing so, we endeavor to incentivize efforts to increase earnings and create a pathway to economic self-sufficiency for all Floridians. This is accomplished through an understanding of the ten root causes of poverty and acting to reduce or eliminate those obstacles.

The Florida Chamber Supports:

- Legislation and public policy that will help meet the 2030 goal of cutting childhood poverty in half.
- Reducing the dependency on entitlement programs through an examination of fiscal-cliffs, understanding the unintended consequences of those programs and addressing generational poverty factors.
- Utilizing a data-driven approach to solving generational poverty, including tools such as **the Florida Gap Map**, which provides the poverty rate for children under 18 in each zip code as well as identifies the reading proficiency gaps for all public county schools.



Learn about your Zip Code at:
TheFloridaGapMap.org



Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy Team

The Florida Chamber Advocacy Team closely tracks thousands of votes each session and testifies continuously throughout the year, making sure the voices of job creators are heard.



Mark Wilson
President
and CEO



David Hart
Executive Vice
Presidents of
Governmental
Affairs & Political
Operations



Frank Walker
Vice President
of Governmental
Affairs



Nicholas Catroppo
Vice President
of Political
Operations



Ivette Faulkner
Executive Vice
President of
Strategic
Communication
and Marketing



Marian Johnson
Executive Director
of the
Florida Chamber
Political Institute



Andrew Wiggins
Senior Director
of Political Affairs
& Coalitions
Advocacy



Carolyn Johnson
Director of
Business,
Economic
Development and
Innovation Policy



Christopher S. Emmanuel
Director of
Infrastructure and
Governance Policy



Matthew K. Choy
Director of Talent,
Education and
Quality of
Life Policy



Anna Grace Lewis
Governmental
Affairs
Coordinator





In addition to our year-round internal Advocacy Team, the Florida Chamber partners with some of the most trusted, successful and well-connected lobbying professionals in Florida on competitiveness issues ranging from taxation, regulations, workers' comp and legal reform to education reform, innovation, water science, transportation, healthcare and more. These experts work together with the Florida Chamber staff and volunteers.



**Josh
Aubuchon**



**Travis
Blanton**



**Melanie
Bostick**



**French
Brown IV**



**David
Childs**



**Matt
Bryan**



**David
Daniel**



**Mark
Delegal**



**Jennifer
Green**



**Jeff
Hartley**



**Thomas
Griffin**



**Gary
Hunter**



**Lisa
Hurley**



**Jon
Johnson**



**Ryan
Matthews**



**Darrick
McGhee**



**Tim
Parson**



**Teye
Reeves**

Florida Chamber's Political Operations

Florida Chamber Political Institute

Florida's most thorough and respected pro-jobs legislative candidate review process

The Florida Chamber Political Institute (FCPI), the research-based arm of the Chamber's political operations department, understands that the candidate selection process is vital. Our engagement efforts begin by recruiting and electing pro-jobs candidates chosen by rigorous candidate interview sessions. FCPI travels statewide and interviews hundreds of new candidates in addition to reviewing each candidate's completed questionnaire. Incumbent candidates are evaluated on a rigorous set of factors, including the legislative grade on their voting record. This helps the Florida Chamber advocate for candidates who have Florida's future as a priority.

Florida Institute for Political Leadership

Florida's preeminent non-partisan campaign training school for local candidates

The Florida Institute for Political Leadership (FIPL), an initiative of the Florida Chamber of Commerce, was created to assist leaders who want to improve their local communities by serving in appointed positions or in elected offices. We are here to help make that process easier. The institute is a non-partisan program designed to recruit, train, and guide individuals by providing leadership and training opportunities to get better candidates across the State of Florida. The Institute partners with local chambers of commerce, and community organizations across Florida, to host campaign schools and training programs.



CANDIDATE SUPPORT

The Florida Chamber of Commerce, with its over 100-year history, has been an early, vocal, and financial supporter of countless successful ballot initiatives, state legislators, and cabinet officials. Weighing in for candidates on both sides of the aisle, the Chamber has proven to be the unifying force in Florida politics.

The Florida Chamber has created the following nonpartisan committees to make direct contributions to select candidates and issue-based campaigns who promote and support a principled free enterprise and job creation agenda. The political committees routinely take on public sector labor unions, extreme environmentalists, and trial lawyers who are working to undermine Florida's business community. Moreover, these committees work to ensure Florida's Constitution is protected and not attacked by out-of-state special interests trying to buy their way onto the ballot. Under Florida election laws, there are no contribution limits for these committees.

Florida Chamber Free Enterprise Fund

Florida's leading political committee helping to secure Florida's future

The Free Enterprise Fund is non-partisan and works to support candidates and issue-based campaigns who promote and support a principled free enterprise and job creation agenda. It stands firmly on its purpose of securing Florida's future and its mission to be the leading voice of business and the driving force of Florida's future. A membership in the Florida Chamber Free Enterprise Fund is reserved for political donors at the \$10,000 level or above.

CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

Protect Our Constitution

Florida's foremost issue committee helping to make Florida more competitive

The Florida Chamber has long opposed placing issues in the Florida Constitution that can be solved through the legislative process. While we recognize that sometimes constitutional amendments are necessary to preserve the integrity of Florida's political system, they should only be considered under "great and extraordinary occasions." Protect Our Constitution defends Florida from out-of-state billionaires that try and buy their way onto the ballot and legislate through the constitution.

Endorsements and the Election Center

Florida's most trusted election information for employers

Our mission is to secure Florida's future. We advocate for candidates who have Florida's future as a priority, and fight to lead Florida in the right direction. In an effort to share information with employers regarding Chamber-backed candidates, each election cycle the Chamber releases a guidebook to the candidates and races, highlighting the candidates the Chamber is supporting.

FLORIDA CHAMBER AND ITS MEMBERS GET RESULTS

During the 2020 election cycle, the Florida Chamber spent \$6.81 million and countless hours identifying, recruiting, and electing pro-jobs candidates. The results were overwhelming victories across the board for business – 97% success rate for Chamber-backed candidates – a resounding defeat of socialism and out-of-state billionaires.

The Florida Chamber constantly strives to recruit better candidates for the legislature and 2020 was a very successful year for growing our collective effort. **Here are a few highlights from this election cycle:**

- The Florida Chamber endorsed over 90 legislative candidates, backing their candidacies with financial resources and substantial voter educative efforts.
- Over one-hundred million dollars was spent to win Florida's legislative races. Campaigns are getting more expensive which is why the Florida Chamber recently launched the Free Enterprise Fund – a member-driven fund to elect pro-jobs candidates for Florida's future.
- With 1.56 million more registered voters since the 2016 Presidential election, Florida's electorate continues to grow and evolve as Florida remains the nation's most important battleground state.

Join the Fight for Free Enterprise Get Involved Today:



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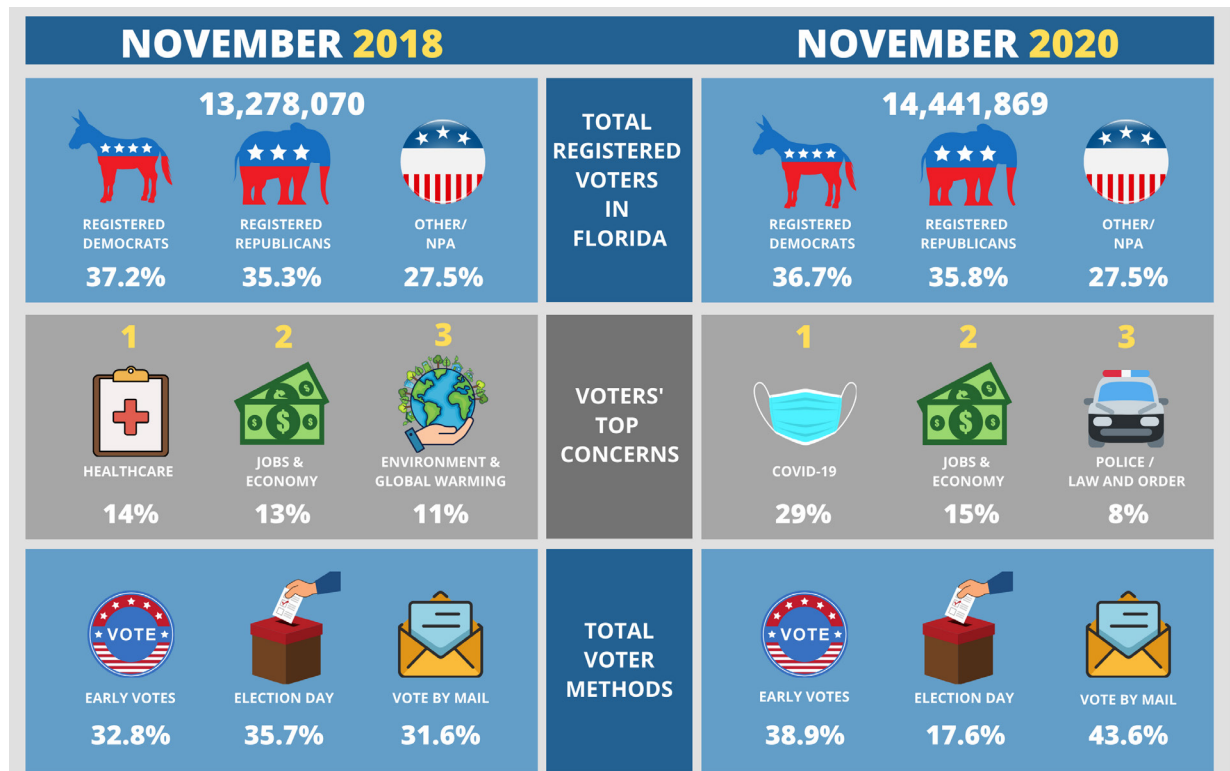


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FLORIDA'S CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



Source: Florida Chamber of Commerce ChamberHub

Help Make Florida More Competitive JOIN THE MISSION



Building a Better Florida through a United Business Community



Florida is at a crossroads. As we rebound from a global pandemic, welcome a new administration to Washington and continue relaunching Florida's economy, a united business community is the only way to ensure Florida continues moving in the right direction. We do not want to be like California, Illinois or New York. To keep Florida, Florida, will take the combined efforts of business leaders who believe in free enterprise and securing the right future for Florida.

Every day the Florida Chamber fights for Florida businesses and to ensure our state remains a pro-jobs, pro-business state that creates jobs and prosperity for all Floridians. The Chamber team, representing Florida's united business community, works alongside seasoned political advocates, experienced political strategists, a small business council and a top-tier research foundation to pave the path for Florida's future.

If you believe in free enterprise and want better outcomes for Florida, then join our mission at the Florida Chamber of Commerce as we unite the business community for good.

Championing Free Enterprise, Making Florida More Competitive

Four ways to get involved:

- 1. JOIN** the Florida Chamber if you believe in free enterprise and want to keep Florida, Florida.
- 2. ENGAGE** in the Chamber's monthly webinars, grassroots efforts, Solution Summit events, social media and newsletters to keep a pulse on how a united business community is moving Florida forward.
- 3. SUPPORT** efforts to recruit and elect better candidates through local Florida Institute for Political Leadership (FIPL) campaign schools, Florida Chamber Political Institute (FCPI) candidate interview process, host political fundraisers, making political contributions and political action to support Chamber-backed candidates.
- 4. CONNECT** with your elected officials and urge them to vote pro-jobs and against special interest agendas.

Interested in joining the Florida Chamber's mission?

Contact:



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Development & Engagement
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JOIN US AT
THE FLORIDA
CHAMBER AND
FLORIDA CHAMBER
FOUNDATION'S
ANNUAL BUSINESS
LEADERS' EVENTS



**FIRST ANNUAL SOUTHEASTERN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON
SAFETY, HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY**

May 10-12 • Disney's Coronado Springs Resort

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ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

May 26

LEARNERS TO EARNERS WORKFORCE SOLUTION SUMMIT

June 15

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July 20-23 • JW Marriott Marco Island

**INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY & ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION
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August 2021

**FUTURE OF FLORIDA FORUM &
FLORIDA CHAMBER ANNUAL MEETING**

September 22-23

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#ChamberStrong



FLORIDA
CHAMBER
of Commerce

SECURING FLORIDA'S FUTURE

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