



THE MAYFIELD MINUTE

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Vero Beach Office:

1053 20th Place
Vero Beach, FL 32960
(772) 778-5077

Tallahassee Office:

317 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 488-0952

Toll Free Numbers:

Phone – (866) 857-7289
Fax – (888) 544-0393

Last week marked the halfway point of the 2009 Regular Legislative Session, and the pace of the process is quickly speeding up. Both the House and the Senate have released their budgets for the year, and more and more bills are working their way to the House floor for a vote. As we break for the holidays, staff will continue to fine-tune the budget so that it may proceed to a floor vote next week. I wish you all a wonderful and safe holiday weekend.

-Rep. Debbie Mayfield



Jon Ward and Lena Juarez, of the Florida Humanities Council, with Rep. Mayfield in Tallahassee



Rep. Mayfield with St. Lucie County Commissioner Chris Dzadoovsky in her Tallahassee office



Marry Ellen Early and George R. Bryan, of FAHSA and Indian River Estates, in Tallahassee with Rep. Mayfield

BUDGET UPDATE

We are currently experiencing the worst budget crisis in Florida's history. We have reviewed the state budget line-by-line and have examined state government spending to make sure that we are focusing on our core missions. I believe the House has proposed a responsible budget that reflects Florida's economic realities without penalizing Florida's families and businesses. The House budget prioritizes spending and protects per-student classroom dollars, continues to fund health care services to those in need, and makes sure that public safety is maintained.

We have made sure to use federal stimulus dollars thoughtfully and responsibly. We realize that these federal dollars are not a silver bullet to solving Florida's financial problems, and that these problems will only be fixed by strengthening Florida's economy and creating jobs for Floridians. Underscoring the House's commitment to prepare our children to compete in the global economy, the House PreK-12 Appropriations Committee spending plan includes the addition of more than \$800 million to the schools' budget for an increase of about \$30 in per-student spending for the coming year. To provide additional funds for education during these challenging economic times, we are transferring funding that had been previously designated for capital costs to be used for operating costs and giving school districts flexibility to move those funds back to capital expenditures if needed. That could potentially add \$380 million into basic school operating budgets and provide funding at a critical time for Florida schools.



Florida's Old and New Capitols

If you have any issues, questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact our district secretary, Bethany Fretwell, at (772) 778-5077 or toll-free at (866) 957-7289.

For more detailed information on legislative issues, please check out the Florida Legislature's website!
www.myfloridahouse.gov



PROTECTING FLORIDA'S HOMEOWNERS

It has become evident that neither Citizens Insurance nor the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund (CAT Fund) would be sufficient to pay for costs incurred by Florida homeowners should a major storm hit the state. Additionally, homeowners need assistance in strengthening their homes against wind damage to help lower everyone's insurance rates.

HB 1495, by Rep. Nelson, will responsibly diminish Florida taxpayers' liability associated with catastrophic costs resulting from a major storm event hitting Florida's shores. The bill also provides incentives for strengthening homes against wind damage. The legislation was passed by the House Insurance, Business & Financial Affairs Policy Committee last Friday morning.

If passed by the full House, the bi-partisan measure would reduce Florida's exposure in the CAT Fund by \$12 billion over six years and increases dollars available for the My Safe Florida Home Project, which helps homeowners finance new storm windows and fortify their roofs against wind damage.

Floridians want to purchase insurance from people they know will pay their claims and this legislation underscores our commitment to protecting Florida homeowners by reducing Florida's liability while incentivizing homeowners to protect their investment and providing funds for paying property damage claims.



Rep. Mayfield with Indian River County Commissioners Bob Solari and Peter O'Bryan



Connie Pease, Rep. Mayfield, and Deanna Sutton, of the FL Republican Women's Network, in Rep. Mayfield's Tallahassee Office



Lawrence Brooks and Marta Schneider of the Children's Home Society of the Treasure Coast with Rep. Mayfield

HB 903- WORKER'S COMPENSATION

Affordable workers' compensation premiums are critical to recharging Florida's economy and creating and maintaining jobs in Florida. Until 2003, Florida's workers' compensation system was the worst in the nation. Governor Bush and the Florida House fought for real reforms and workers' compensation premiums dropped dramatically. Unfortunately, the Florida Supreme Court threw out the reforms and the resulting rise in premiums has had a negative effect on Florida's economy. This is a significant issue and higher costs equal lost jobs

Providing Florida's businesses with affordable workers' compensation premiums is a top priority for Speaker Cretul and it is critical to recharging Florida's economy and creating and maintaining jobs. To reach this goal, the House this week passed House Bill 903, sponsored by Rep. Anitere Flores, an important workers' compensation measure and is working closely with President Atwater and the Senate so that Florida's businesses can continue to focus on creating jobs and are not priced out of Florida's economy.