



THE MAYFIELD MINUTE

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Florida's Old and New Capitols

This year has been plagued by great debate over immigration. Efforts to resolve this issue have lead to heated discussions among legislators and constituents alike.

To resolve the issue of illegal immigration and the burdens associated with it, I support a common sense approach involving enforcement at both the state and national level.

-Rep. Debbie Mayfield

IMMIGRATION

While I recognize that we do not share many of the same problems that Arizona has with illegal immigration - a porous, unprotected border, kidnappings, human trafficking and an unchecked flow of illegal drugs - I do believe we have the same obligation to uphold the rule of law in our state. Let me be clear on the issue: legal immigration is part of what built America and has made her great. Illegal immigration threatens our economy and our security.

In Florida, the illegal population is estimated at approximately 950,000, which is about seven percent of the nation's projected illegal alien population. According to some reports, this illegal population likely costs the state of Florida an additional \$3.8 billion annually.

Considering that under both Republican and Democrat administrations, the federal government has failed to secure our nation's borders and effectively manage immigration issues, I support a new approach here in our state. Florida can begin making a difference with the growing problem of illegal immigration by ensuring that our state is not and does not further become a magnet for illegal immigrants and related activity.

At the state level, illegal immigration is a law enforcement issue that must be handled with common-sense law enforcement tactics. The safety and security of our citizens is a priority second to none, and it begins with the enforcement of our laws. By ensuring law enforcement has the training and tools necessary to enforce immigration laws, the state can actively pursue these issues without resulting in racial profiling.

We must also insist that the Obama Administration take a more aggressive posture to enforce federal immigration laws. The primary responsibility of the federal government is to ensure that America's borders are protected, and as a critical part of national security, this matters more in Florida now than ever

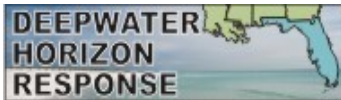
Enforcing the rule of law begins with securing our nation's borders, but it also includes fixing the visa and entry process, as well as opposing amnesty in any form. Opposing amnesty is the fair thing to do, because we should not penalize those who have come to our country through the legal and proper system.

The ever growing problem of illegal immigration hurts us nationally with both security and economic consequences. There is a process that must be followed; it is the rule of law. The federal government must tackle reform to help those who are trying to enter our country legally and minimize bureaucratic red tape to more effectively process those qualified individuals who have specialized skills.

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Should you have any state constituent issues, please do not hesitate to contact Heather Dean in my Vero Beach office at (772) 778-5077.

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IMMIGRATION, CONTINUED

This is not only an issue of the individuals who come into our country illegally, but also of the businesses that knowingly hire them. Such businesses are a significant factor that attracts illegal immigrants to our state. This year, the Florida House unanimously passed legislation that I co-sponsored that would make government agencies verify that outside contractors and subcontractors do not hire illegal workers. Specified contractors and subcontractors would have been required to certify in writing that they have registered with and participate in a federal work authorization program such as the E-verify system prior to receiving a contract with the state. Unfortunately, this measure did not pass the Senate.

While we must take action to address illegal immigration, we must also ensure that Florida remains a state of opportunity and promise for those who enter our nation legally. Florida's rich diversity and broad range of cultures are two of the state's greatest qualities, and we must continue the tradition of being a beautiful destination where dreams can be realized. I will continue to support solutions so that Florida is not a place that rewards illegal behavior.

2010 CHAMBER POST-LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP



A special thanks to the Indian River Chamber of Commerce for hosting a Post-Legislative Wrap-Up Session on June 4th. Pictured left to right are Sen. Mike Haridopolos, Rep. Debbie Mayfield, Sen. Joe Negron, Linda Schlitt-Gonzalez, Chairman of the Board of the Indian River Chamber of Commerce and Rep. Ralph Poppell.

PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY

This year, the Legislature continued to support policies that will promote the development of renewable resources and the job-creating benefits that growing economic sector can bring. However, because of our limited resources and to better protect taxpayer dollars, we had to be creative in how we addressed energy solutions.

HB 7179 involves Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing, a no-cost to taxpayers, no-mandate, consumer opt-in approach to bringing clean energy technology to homeowners and businesses. The development of PACE programs begins with providing local governments the flexibility to, together or individually, craft loan programs for homeowners or businesses that can be used to pay for improvements like photo-voltaic solar panels, high efficiency water heaters, and storm hardening improvements. These loans can be repaid over various periods of time depending on the amount of the loan, and they can be repaid as part of the homeowner's property tax bill.

These programs, and the loans themselves, will be completely voluntary. Local governments can choose whether to develop the program, and homeowners can choose whether to participate in a locally provided program. No taxpayer or utility ratepayer will be asked to help pay for another homeowner's improvements.

Because of PACE, more people will be able to afford to make energy efficiency and storm hardening improvements to their homes because they will be able to avoid the upfront costs that often act as a barrier to consumers. As a result of PACE, market demand for these products will likely increase, and market growth can lower costs for Floridians and help create real jobs for Floridians.