



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



Florida's Old and New Capitols

SPECIAL SESSION

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During the past several months residents of the Florida Panhandle and the Gulf Coast have been in crisis as a result of an oil well blowout off the shore in Louisiana.

I recognize that the people in the Panhandle are hurting and businesses are struggling. Local business owners are upset about how the constant photo-ops by politicians are creating negative news coverage for the area. Fishermen are angry because they are seeing their livelihood ruined, and are being promised claims checks they have not received. Local government officials are discouraged that the Federal Government, the State Government, and BP were not giving them a seat at the table. Floridians are frustrated that their leaders in Washington are failing them.

It is important for us to act in a responsible and meaningful way to provide assistance and support to those in need. Now is not the time for photo-ops. Floridians are looking for real leadership and solutions, not symbolic gestures that are politically motivated. Likewise, banning something already banned in Florida is redundant and is more about political solutions for politicians trying to capitalize on the crisis than about real solutions for residents of the Panhandle.

The Governor's proposal to ban an industry already banned in Florida will not bring relief to the people impacted by the oil well blowout in Louisiana. The Governor's proposal will not prevent oil from continuing to wash up on our state's coastlines, won't put a single new skimmer off our shores, and won't produce any new boom to protect our coasts. Wasting four days' worth of taxpayer dollars in a redundant special session won't help us force BP to be any more accountable, speed up the claims process, save a single business or help create a job.

What I believe remains most important is that during the recent Special Session the Legislature developed a serious work plan to craft proposals that will focus on truly helping those Floridians who have been so severely affected in many different ways. This common sense plan to work quickly, analyze data and create solutions and report back with a roadmap for action based on facts on the ground is a serious approach toward beginning the recovery effort. Returning in September in order to effectively implement the findings of the workgroups will create meaningful solutions and help Floridians get back to work and start the recovery.

Bringing the Legislature into a last-minute special session to attempt to ban an industry already banned in Florida wastes taxpayer dollars and is nothing more than Washington-style broken politics.

While critics are going complain about this approach, it is more important to deliver real results for those Floridians impacted by the crisis than wasting taxpayer dollars hiding behind a symbolic ploy intended only for political gain. Floridians deserve strong leadership and real solutions in a time of crisis, not political posturing.

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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Technology Corner:

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I will be posting updates on my Twitter account and you can stay up to date by following me at



Session Live:

You can follow daily events in the House of Representatives at www.myfloridahouse.gov.



Rep. Mayfield and Elizabeth Harpring watch as Iridessa makes her way toward the open ocean

TURTLE RELEASE AT DISNEY RESORT VERO BEACH

I had the pleasure of attending a Tour de Turtle event at Disney Vero Beach on July 30th. Tour de Turtles follows the amazing journey of 11 endangered sea turtles as they compete in the 3rd annual Tour de Turtles migration marathon. This event is an online satellite tracking adventure helping to raise awareness about the threats sea turtles face on land and in the ocean. I was on hand for the release of Iridessa and Merryweather. You can follow the adventure at www.tourdeturtles.org.

DISTRICT 80 WELCOMES NEW LEGISLATIVE AIDE

My legislative office recently welcomed Dustin Paulson who has come on board to serve as our legislative aide. Dustin comes to us from Tallahassee, where he most recently worked for the PreK-12 Policy Committee at the Florida House of Representatives. Dustin grew up in Tallahassee and graduated from Florida State University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science in 2006. After graduation, Dustin moved to Sebastian, where he managed a local restaurant, Taco Reef, with his brother until 2008. Dustin is happy to be back on the Treasure Coast and excited about working with the citizens of District 80.

RIISING COST OF MEDICAID



The Medicaid Program continues to consume more and more of Florida’s total budget each year. This fiscal year the program alone will consume over 28% of the entire state budget. By 2014, that percentage is expected to reach 33%. Costs in the program continue to climb as enrollment in the program increases and health care costs rise. Additionally, the Federal Health Care Reform Legislation recently signed into law by President Obama will expand Medicaid eligibility to more than a million new Floridians. These factors threaten the stability of Florida’s Medicaid program as well as other vital state programs that will inevitably see their share of the budget shift to cover the cost of Medicaid. The growth of the Medicaid program in its current form is unsustainable.

The House of Representatives approached this issue by putting forth a comprehensive reform plan to significantly control costs while improving the quality of care. Florida’s current Medicaid system consists of a patchwork of fees for service plans and 20 different managed care waivers with a series of carve-outs, exceptions and special designations. The current Florida system is the most complex in the country.

The House plan would move the Medicaid program into a statewide fully integrated managed care plan where participants in the program would have several health plans to choose from to fit their individual health needs. The approach would streamline the program and provide stability to the recipients. Most importantly, focusing the state into one integrated system would enable our agencies to effectively measure performance and would achieve better health outcomes for everyone in the program.

This past session the Senate did not consider this legislation, but I believe we have laid a solid foundation which we will continue to build on for next session.