



THE MAYFIELD MINUTE

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State legislators returned to the Capitol this week to kick off three weeks of committee meetings in advance of the start of session on March 2nd. Our first priority is to get Florida’s economy going again. In order to achieve success we must take a fiscally responsible, long term view that puts Florida in the best shape possible to rebound when the economy picks up. That means making tough choices now to stop spending more than we can afford.

Government needs to do exactly what Florida’s families are doing, spending less because we have less to spend. Florida’s economic issues aren’t about bigger government or smaller government. It is about a smarter government that is focused on finding common sense solutions.

-Rep. Debbie Mayfield

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SPACE SHUTTLE ORBITER RETIREMENT

Since 1981, over 125 space shuttles have launched from Kennedy Space Center, with the last planned shuttle flight scheduled for September 2010. In 2008, the shuttle program accounted for approximately 15% of the Kennedy Space Center’s budget and more than 40,000 jobs in the state are attributed to the space center’s operation—an indication of the historical and economic importance of the shuttle program to Floridians. The Space Shuttle Orbiter Retirement Bill (HM253), of which I am a cosponsor, requests that Congress directs that one of the three remaining space shuttle orbiters be preserved and placed on permanent display at the Kennedy Space Center as a permanent reminder of the importance of the shuttle program.

FLORIDA FIREARMS FREEDOM ACT

In this current session, I am also co-sponsoring HB 21 which would create the Florida Firearms Freedom Act. According to 2007 data from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the State of Florida has 10 pistol, 23 rifle and 3 shotgun manufacturers. HB 21 declares that certain firearms, ammunition or firearms accessories made and retained in Florida for personal use, or certain parts imported into the state of Florida are not subject to federal regulation under interstate commerce because they fall under the classification of “intrastate” commerce.



Currently, under the Commerce Clause, Congress has the power to regulate the flow of interstate commerce to ensure it is free from local restraint imposed by various states affecting the various firearm manufacturers in Florida. If this legislation is passed, the bill will likely face a Tenth Amendment challenge in federal court to redefine Congressional authority under the Commerce Clause.



Florida’s Old and New Capitols

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

CONSTITUENT CORNER

Facing foreclosure? There is a court authorized foreclosure managed mediation program available in the 19th Judicial Circuit to assist any homeowner/borrower whose residential property is the subject of a mortgage foreclosure action. For more information contact my district office or visit the following link:

www.collinscenter.org



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

CIGARETTE SURCHARGE REVENUE

I recently filed HB 669 also known as the Cigarette Surcharge Revenue Uses bill. This legislation will not institute a new tax but will allocate 5% of the \$1.00 revenue from last year's Cigarette Surcharge to be appropriated to the Department of Children and Family Services.

The purpose of this bill is to assist community-based mental health services in providing programs to reduce the rate of smoking among persons with mental illnesses.

The Florida Council for Behavioral Healthcare reports that: "While 22% of the population smokes, more than 75% of people with severe mental illnesses are tobacco-dependent and 90% of individuals with schizophrenia are tobacco-dependent".

Currently, 75 percent of individuals with mental illness smoke 3 to 4 times the rate of the general population, consuming 44% of all cigarettes consumed in the United States.

Of the estimated \$700 million in revenue based off of a \$1.00 increase on a pack of cigarettes, 5%, or \$35 million of which will be allocated to the DCFS to "meet the long underfunded needs of persons with mental illnesses".

As the 49th ranked state in per capita funding for mental health, it is in the best interests of the State of Florida to adopt this bill for the further education of the harmful effects of smoking especially for those persons with mental illnesses.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

I have also introduced a local bill to address the current grading process for the Florida Atlantic University Lab Charter School and the St. Lucie County School District.

Currently, the FAU lab school is considered it's own school district under Florida law. This is the case for all university lab schools in the state. The anomaly in this case is that the St. Lucie County School District has special approval to fund certain aspects of this school with local dollars, but sees none of the benefits. The FAU lab schools FCAT grades are not used to calculate the overall district grade.

Therefore, I have proposed a local bill that recently received the approval of the St. Lucie County Legislative Delegation. This legislation would require that the FCAT grades from the FAU Lab School be used when calculating the St. Lucie County School District's overall grade. This will increase the county to an A school district and allow the county to increase their opportunities for economic development.

