



# Florida Senate Democratic Caucus Newsletter

Sixth Week of 2023 Session: 4/10/23-4/14/23

## WEEK 6: STILL FIGHTING, STILL WORKING

### 6-week Abortion Ban Signed

The Governor signed the 6-week abortion ban hours after the Florida House passed it.

AP ASSOCIATED PRESS

#### DeSantis signs Florida GOP's 6-week abortion ban into law

By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE April 14, 2023



Senate Democratic Leader Lauren Book responded: "Florida's new abortion ban turns back the clock on women's rights and essential freedoms – bringing the government into exam rooms and criminalizing women and their doctors over private healthcare decisions."

But let's be clear: abortion until 15 weeks IS still legal in Florida, until the Supreme Court decides our fate."

Here's a reminder of some of the amendments filed by Senate Democrats that were **rejected by Republicans**:



Senator Geraldine Thompson's amendment would have allowed an exemption for women under threat of domestic violence.



Senator Tina Polsky's amendment would have allowed for a religious exemption.



Senator Lori Berman's amendment would have added regulations for fake abortion clinics, requiring them to at a minimum have a licensed ultrasound tech.



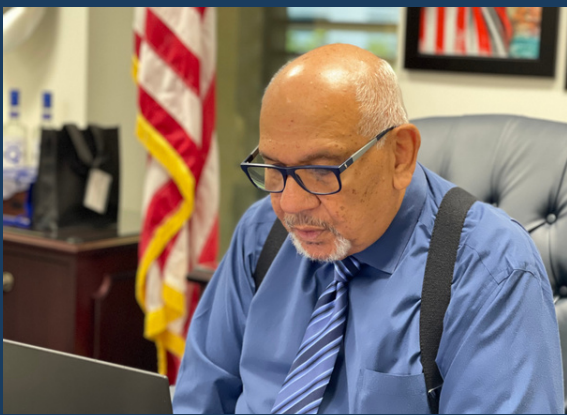
Senator Tracie Davis's amendment would have diverted money from the fake abortion clinics for family planning and minority maternal mortality programs.

# Anti-LGBTQ Legislation

This session we've seen several bills targeting the LGBTQ community - last week SB 1320, the Don't Say Gay expansion law passed its final committee and SB 1438, which targets drag shows and pride festivals, was approved by the Senate. The most telling comment came from a House member, who called trans people "mutants, demons &imps". Democratic Senators condemned the comments:

**"WHEN WE PICK UP THESE MICROPHONES, WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL HOW WE USE OUR FAITH AND HOW WE USE OUR PLATFORM... THAT WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY IS DANGEROUS, THAT WHAT HAPPENED YESTERDAY SHOULD NOT HAPPEN IN A BODY OF LEADERS WHO SIT AND WALK INSIDE THIS CHAMBER WHO REPRESENT 22 MILLION PEOPLE."**

## SENATOR SHEVRIN JONES



Senator Victor Torres speaking to WESH News about the House member's comments



Watch Senator Shevrin Jones' floor comments [here](#)

**"I DON'T WANT TO HEAR SOMEBODY WHO IS AN ELECTED OFFICIAL UP HERE CRITICIZING AND THINKING THAT MY GRANDCHILD IS A DEMON OR A MUTANT - I TAKE OFFENSE TO THAT."**

## SENATOR VICTOR TORRES

# Higher Education

**SB 266** is a higher education overhaul pushed by Governor DeSantis.

It originally specifically targeted diversity, equity and inclusion in universities & colleges . Even though the bill has changed since it's original filing, it still remains anti-academic freedom.

**Attack on freedom of thought**  
**Attack on freedom to learn**



**Attack on freedom to think**  
**Attack on freedom to explore**

**" We're losing our teachers because we're holding them hostage. We're losing our students because they can't learn freely. So my question to my colleagues is: why are we so fearful learning about history - good, bad, and all the facts in between? "**

**Senator Tracie Davis**

**" I think we want to deny our history rather than celebrate our progress. You can't celebrate your progress unless you know that you had a distance to overcome. This is a bill about pretending that Florida isn't what Florida is. And that Florida hasn't come from a place where now we do have equity, diversity and inclusion. "**

**Senator Geraldine Thompson**

# Catastrophic Flooding in Fort Lauderdale

*Donate and volunteer here*

**Our thoughts are with the Fort Lauderdale community as they recover from this sudden disaster**



Join

BROWARD FLOOD RELIEF COOPERATIVE

## BROWARD FLOOD RELIEF

We Are Requesting Donations for Victims of the Devastating Floods in Broward County, Fl.

Collection Dates  
April 14th - April 21st

### ITEMS NEEDED

- ✓ Heavy-duty trash bags
- ✓ Buckets
- ✓ Bleach, household cleaners
- ✓ Mops, sponges, washcloths, gloves
- ✓ Tarps
- ✓ Bottled water
- ✓ Mattresses, pillows
- ✓ Toiletries, hygienic items

TO DONATE OR REQUEST ASSISTANCE VISIT:  
**BROWARDFLOODRELIEF.ORG**

### DONATIONS COLLECTED AT:

Rep. Hillary Cassel  
MON-FRI | 9am-5pm  
3475 Sheridan St., Suite 203  
Hollywood, Fl 33021

Sen. Shevrin Jones, Miami Gardens  
MON-THURS | 9am-5pm, FRI | 9am-1pm  
606 NW 183rd Street  
Miami Gardens, FL 3305

Equality Florida - Broward  
M-F | 9am-5pm  
2302 NE 7th Ave  
Wilton Manors, FL 33169

**FOR WEEKEND DROP-OFFS OR QUESTIONS CALL KEVIN AT 305-890-7790 OR VANESSA AT 305-985-9141**

# DEMOCRATIC BILLS ON THE MOVE

Senator Shevrin Jones' bill **SB 196** would require school districts inform students and parents of **career and academic planning options and work-based learning opportunities and pathways.**

It passed the full Senate unanimously!

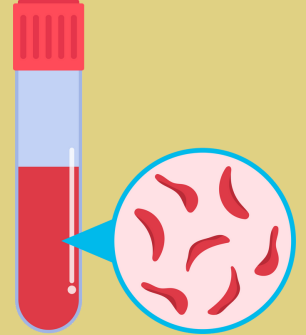


## A FOCUS ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder that primarily affects the African-American community. Senator Rouson and Senator Davis have legislation to better treat, track and educate the community about sickle cell disease.

**SB 1352**, sponsored by **Senator Rouson** requires a review of Medicaid enrollees with sickle cell disease, to determine whether available covered medications, treatment and services meet the needs of those with the disease.

**SB 1408**, sponsored by **Senator Davis** establishes a grant program for prevention, care, and treatment of sickle cell disease and for community-based educational programs



Here's a glance at other bills filed by Senate Democrats heard in committee during Week 6:

**SB 8 - Relief of Leonard Cure/State of Florida - Senator Jones**  
Claimant payment by Leonard Cure for \$817,000 for being wrongfully incarcerated for 16 years.

**SB 528 - Custody and Supervision of Specified Offenders - Senator Davis**

Among other things, eliminates the possibility of basic gain-time and incentive gain-time for persons convicted of committing or attempting, soliciting, or conspiring to commit a sexual battery on or after July 1, 2023.

**SB 836 - Theft from Nonprofit Organizations - Senator Powell**  
Reclassifies the crime of theft, whenever a person is charged with committing theft from an organization that person knows or has reason to believe is qualified as charitable

**SB 678 - Disposal of Property - Senator Powell**  
Allows the Florida Department of Transportation to convey land not needed for transportation facilities to other governmental entities without consideration for affordable housing purposes.

**SB 938 - Operation and Administration of the Baker Act - Senator Davis**  
Requires the Department of Children & Families to update and publish a Baker Act handbook annually and post to the agency's website.

**SB 996 - Driver License, Identification Card, and Motor Vehicle Registration Applications - Senator Berman**  
Requires the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to include on the application and renewal forms of a motor vehicle registration, driver license, and identification card an option to make a voluntary contribution of \$1 to Best Buddies International.

**SB 1002 - Motor Vehicle Glass - Senator Stewart**  
Prohibits motor vehicle repair shops from offering anything of value to a customer in exchange for making an insurance claim for motor vehicle glass replacement or repair.

**SB 1005 - High School Equivalency Diplomas - Senator Torres**  
Prohibits a school district from requiring certain students take a course before taking the high school equivalency exam in certain circumstances.

**SB 1012 - Certified Peer Specialist Gateway Pilot Program - Senator Rouson**  
Creates the Certified Peer Specialist Pilot Program within the Department of Corrections.

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DEAR FLORIDA.

AS DEMOCRATS AND FLORIDIANS. WE'RE SICK OF THE CULTURE WARS BEING PLAYED OUT DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION AT YOUR EXPENSE.

WHILE WE CONTINUE THE FIGHT TO PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS & FREEDOMS - WE HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK:

WHAT ARE THE REAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT YOU DAILY? ANYTHING WE CAN HELP WITH?

SHARE WITH US AT [HELP@DEARFLORIDADEMS.COM](mailto:HELP@DEARFLORIDADEMS.COM).

TALK TO YOU SOON.

FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS



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