

Senator Gary Siplin's District 19 Newsletter



January 1, 2012
Issue No. 3

Dear Neighbors & Friends:

Thank you for allowing me to serve you in the Florida Senate. As the final days of my term in office come to an end, I want to utilize this newsletter to keep you abreast of the things that are occurring, both in Tallahassee and at home, that are of greatest importance to you.

~~~ God Bless, Gary



The New Evans High School

On Friday, December 30th, I was honored to be joined by members of the clergy from all over Orange County for the consecration the "new" Evans High School. This long-overdue multi-million dollar educational facility will serve as the cornerstone of the social and economic rejuvenation of the Pine Hills Community.



Senator Siplin's Upcoming Events

Legislative Agriculture Chairs Summit

01.06 thru 01.08
Washington, D.C.

Dept. of Juvenile Justice Boys Summit

01.07.2011
Smith Neighborhood Center

Interim Committee Meetings of the Florida Senate

01.09.2011
Tallahassee, FL

2012 Legislative Session

01.10.2011
Tallahassee, FL

SW Orlando Jaycees/City of Orlando Annual MLK Holiday Parade

01.14.2011
Orlando, FL

Town of Eatonville 35th Annual MLK Parade & Celebration

01.14.2011
Eatonville, FL

South Apopka Ministerial Alliance 3rd Annual MLK Parade

12.16.2011
Apopka, FL

Evans High School Dedication

01.21.2012
Pine Hills

C-SPAN Redistricting Forum

01.28.2011
Evans High School Auditorium

In 2005, after years of operating in a subpar learning environment with deteriorating physical conditions, the Orange County School Board moved Evans High School to the highest priority spot on the list of schools in need of renovations. When plans to construct a new school on a new site were rejected by County officials, I, with the help of former Senate President and current Chief Financial Officer, Jeff Atwater, was able to secure a waiver that allowed Evans High School to be rebuilt in its original location on the corner of Pine Hills and Silver Star Roads.

As a result of those efforts, there now stands a beautiful, state-of-the-art institution of learning in a community of need, that will serve as the springboard for excellence and high student achievement for years to come.

Join me in celebrating the Dedication of the "New" Evans High School on Saturday, January 21st. The Parade down Silver Star Road begins at 10am and the Dedication Ceremony in the Evans High School Stadium begins at 12 noon.



Contact my office at 407.297.2071 for additional information.

Legislative Preview: 2012

Committee Assignments

Agriculture, Chair

Governmental Oversight & Accountability,
Vice Chair

Higher Education, Vice Chair

Budget

Budget Subcommittee on Education
PreK-12 Appropriations

Budget Subcommittee on Higher Education
Appropriations

Reapportionment

Regulated Industries

Rules

Joint Legislative Budget Commission

With the once-a-decade task of Reapportionment at the center of this year's Legislative Session, there are few else things that will be dealt with this year by the Legislature. Here are some of the things you can expect to come out of the 2012 Session:

- **State Budget:** With an estimated shortfall of approximately \$2 billion dollars in revenue, additional budget cuts should be expected in all areas, including more cuts to social service programs and state employee benefits.
- **Destination Resorts Legislation:** Another bill to allow high-end resort casinos to be built in South Florida was introduced this year. Supporters of the legislation argue that Florida needs the new jobs, while opponents of the bill say it will threaten the existence of current businesses and harm Florida's family-friendly tourist environment.
- **Personal Injury Protection (PIP) Reform:** Florida – and particularly District 19 – has recently experienced an increase in motor vehicle-related insurance fraud associated with PIP no-fault insurance. It is likely that legislation will be introduced this year to either drastically reform or eliminate PIP.
- **Comprehensive Energy Legislation:** Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam plans to submit a proposed Energy Bill that purports to increase the State's renewable energy production and create more jobs by restoring tax credits that expired in 2010 and giving the PSC direction on diversifying fuel in the State.
- **Online Hotel Booking Tax:** Online travel companies like Expedia and Priceline pay taxes to the State on the wholesale cost they pay hotels for unbooked rooms, but not on the marked-up retail rate that they sell the rooms to online customers for. Local hoteliers argue that this gives online companies an unfair tax advantage. Legislation to address this issue may reappear this year.
- **Immigration Legislation:** Although no bill has currently been filed, Senate President Mike Haridopolos vowed to reintroduce legislation this year aimed to "get tough on illegal immigration." Last year's Senate Immigration bill did not include, however, a controversial provision that would have required employers to verify the immigration status of their workers.

*From My Family
Stuff and I:*

New Legislation from Sen. Siplin

At the helm of the 2012 Legislative Session, I've introduced a few more pieces of legislation that I would like to share with you:

Youth Summer Employment:

This bill would create a funding source for youth summer employment by redirecting a portion of the alcoholic beverage excise tax into a trust fund to operate summer youth programs.

Juvenile Delinquency

Records: This bill would prohibit the Florida Department of Law Enforcement from releasing the criminal records of minors to persons in the private sector or to noncriminal justice agencies unless the minor has committed a felony or is a habitual offender (3 or more misdemeanors).

Inmate Identification Card

Transfer: This bill would allow a Department of Corrections original certificate of identification or valid identification card to be considered satisfactory proof of identity in order for a former inmate to be issued a State identification card by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

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