



## Happy Mother's Day!

The 2019 Legislative Session has ended and I am glad to be back home to celebrate Mother's Day with my family. I hope you enjoy this special day with your family sharing memories and making new ones.

I look forward to my continued service to you and the citizens of District 17, as we work to make our community a better place to live, work and raise our families.

If you or someone you know needs my assistance, please don't hesitate to contact my office. My staff and I are here to serve you!

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## Highlights from the 2019 Legislative Session

### Tax Relief

The Florida Legislature is committed to reducing the tax burden facing families and businesses in a meaningful way. This year we passed the 2019 Tax Package which delivers broad-based tax relief to families and businesses across the state.

[HB 7123: Taxation](#) provides approximately \$121 million in tax relief by creating a five day Back-To-School Sales Tax Holiday (August 2-6) so families can enjoy savings as they stock up on necessary school supplies; a seven day Disaster Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday (May 31-June 6) so families may prepare for the upcoming hurricane season; lowering the Business Rent Tax; and creating several tax relief benefits to help those impacted by Hurricane Michael.

### Healthcare

This session the Legislature worked to transform health care in the state of Florida by expanding patient access to safe and affordable care.

[HB 23: Telehealth](#) authorizes Florida licensed health care professionals to use "telehealth" for the treatment of patients using electronic communications. The bill also authorizes out-of-state health care professionals to use telehealth to deliver health care services to Florida patients if they register with the Department of Health, meet certain eligibility requirements, and pay a fee. The bill establishes standards of practice for services provided using telehealth, including patient examination, record-keeping, and a prohibition on prescribing controlled substances for chronic malignant pain. This innovative legislation will improve access to care for Floridians, reduce overall healthcare expenses, and ease burdens on families and senior citizens who can now conveniently consult with a doctor from the comfort of their homes.

[HB 19: Prescription Drug Importation Program](#) allows Floridians to take advantage of lower priced Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved prescription drugs, imported from Canada and other international countries. The bill establishes eligibility criteria for the types of prescription drugs which may be imported and the entities that may export or import those prescription drugs. The bill also outlines the importation process, safety standards, drug distribution conditions, and penalties for violations of program requirements. Additionally, this program requires federal authorization by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Through this legislation Floridians will be able to enjoy safe and more affordable prescription drugs.

### **Public Safety**

In an effort to improve public safety and emergency response measures, the Florida Legislature passed the following measures.

[HB 441: Emergency Response Systems](#) ensures that when a #911 service receives an emergency communication, they are able to directly communicate by radio with first responders within the surrounding area, regardless of jurisdiction. This bill also requires each county to implement a text-to-911 service by January 1, 2020 so that persons who cannot speak, or whose safety is compromised by speaking, can safely and effectively use the 911 system.

[SB 168: Federal Immigration Enforcement](#) prohibits local governments from adopting sanctuary policies and requires cooperation with the federal government on immigration enforcement. This legislation also provides protection for witnesses or victims of a crime of domestic violence, rape, sexual exploitation, sexual assault, murder, manslaughter, assault, battery, human trafficking, kidnapping, false imprisonment, involuntary servitude, fraud in foreign labor contracting, blackmail, extortion or witness tampering.

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## **From the Desk of Governor Ron DeSantis**

Now that the Florida Legislature has approved the budget, also known as the [2019-2020 General Appropriations Act](#), it has been forwarded to Governor Ron DeSantis for his consideration.

The Governor has the authority to reject the budget, as well as line item veto authority which can be used to delete any specific budget item within the Appropriations Act. Once the Governor has completed his review, he will then sign the General Appropriations Act into law, establishing the statewide budget for the next fiscal year. If you have any concerns about items included in the Legislature's budget or would like to express your support for certain programs, please [contact Governor DeSantis's Office](#).

During the final days of Session, the Florida Senate confirmed the Governor's Executive Agency Heads:

- Mary Mayhew, Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration
- Barbara Palmer, Director of Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- Halsey Beshears, Secretary, Department of Business and Professional Regulation
- Chad Poppell, Secretary, Department of Children and Families
- Kenneth Lawson, Executive Director, Department of Economic Opportunity
- Richard Prudom, Secretary, Department of Elder Affairs
- Noah Valenstein, Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection
- Simone Marsteller, Secretary, Department of Juvenile Justice
- Jim Poppell, Secretary, Department of the Lottery
- Jonathan Satter, Secretary, Department of Management Services

- Mark Inch, Secretary, Department of Corrections
- Laurel Lee, Secretary of State, Department of State
- Kevin Thibault, Secretary, Department of Transportation

*"I am proud of the team we have assembled to lead our agencies, which include some of the brightest minds and leaders our state and nation have to offer. I'd like to thank the Florida Senate for confirming my appointments and for recognizing their leadership and talent."* said Governor DeSantis.

The Governor also **signed the following bills into law** this week:

[SB 7030: Implementation of Legislative Recommendation of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission](#) increases access to mental health resources for all of our students and ensures that our teacher and faculty are better trained and prepared to identify and respond to students suffering from mental health problems. This legislation creates a School Hardening and Harm Mitigation Workgroup to investigate and improve school design and infrastructure to maximize student safety. The bill also gives local school districts the control, and the tools, to decide how to best implement the law and protect students.

[SB 310: Off-Highway Vehicles](#) redefines the terms ATV and ROV to increase width and weight allowed for these vehicles. This change will allow manufacturers to meet consumer and regulatory demands for safer vehicles.

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## District Highlights

### Indian River County Beach Renourishment

This session the Florida Legislature allocated \$50 million for beach restoration in the 2019-2020 budget and unanimously passed my Coastal Management bill to improve the beach restoration process and ensure the projects of greatest need rise to the top annually. This year the following projects will be funded in Indian River County:

[Vero Beach Restoration](#) \$1,748,751

This beach nourishment project will extend approximately 3.1 miles from Tracking Station Beachfront Park to Riomar Country Club. The area has been designated as critically eroded, threatening City Parks and private development.

[Sebastian Inlet Management Plan \(IMP\) Implementation](#) \$2,980, 521

The Sebastian IMP establishes strategies to best manage sand bypassing activities for placement of beach quality sand on adjacent eroding beaches, thus replicating the natural drift that is interrupted or altered by an inlet. This funding will be utilized to dredge sand from the Sebastian Inlet sand trap and navigation channel to restore downdrift beaches experiencing critical erosion.

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### Eau Gallie River Restoration Project

The St. Johns River Water Management District will be celebrating the completion of the Eau Gallie River muck dredging project on Monday, May 13th at 10:00 AM at Ballard Park (924 Thomas Barbour Dr, Melbourne).

The project has removed more than 600,000 cubic yards of muck from the main stem of the 3.9 mile long Eau Gallie River, a tributary of the Indian River Lagoon. Muck is a mix of fine-grained sediments, sand, clay and organic matter in untreated stormwater runoff that drains to canals and storm drains connected to tributaries in the lagoon. Muck can accumulate nutrients that contribute to algal blooms and create detrimental conditions for seagrasses and organisms vital to the lagoon's aquatic food chain.

Dredging began in February 2017, when dredgers began pumping muck from the Eau Gallie River to a storage facility on property owned by Brevard County.

The Indian River Lagoon is a unique and precious resource that is vital to the health of our economy. Along with my colleagues, I am committed to improving the health of the Indian River Lagoon with the right policies in place to support a comprehensive restoration plan with long-term funding sources. The completion of the Eau Gallie Muck Dredging Project marks another major step forward in restoring our treasured waterway.

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