The Governor’s State of the State speech failed to grasp the reality Floridians are living with - and struggling with - on a daily basis: skyrocketing prices, stagnant wages, unaffordable housing and healthcare costs - the list goes on.

The Florida Legislature must put partisanship aside to stand up to the absentee Governor and start putting Floridians first – focusing on policies that give individuals and families the opportunity to be economically strong, healthy, safe, and free.

That’s what Leader Book shares in rebuttal – watch her full response on any of our social media accounts.

“The Priorities of the People Must Always Be the Priority.”
Leader Lauren Book
Democratic lawmakers also offered their own responses to the Governor’s speech - Senator Shevrin Jones led “The People’s Response” in a press conference with Senator Bobby Powell, Jr. (Let’s Talk Real Talk!), Senator Lori Berman, and several House Democrats to highlight the disconnect between the Governor’s message and the reality Florida’s residents are living with.

“THIS MOMENT CALLS FOR BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO SOLVE REAL PROBLEMS. NOT FOR DIVISIVE RHETORIC.”
Senator Shevrin Jones
### FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS
#### 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PRIORITIES

**Florida Dreamin':**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Strong</th>
<th>Healthy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 348 INSURANCE REBATE PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME SENIORS&lt;br&gt;SB 1378 CONDO REFORM&lt;br&gt;SB 64 LANDLORDS AND TENANTS&lt;br&gt;SB 1244 KEEP FLORIDIANS HOUSED ACT</td>
<td><strong>MEDICAID EXPANSION</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 946 MEDICAID EXPANSION&lt;br&gt;SB 670 COVERAGE FOR MAMMOMGRAMS AND SUPPLEMENTAL BREAST CANCER SCREENINGS</td>
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<td><strong>CHILDREN &amp; SENIORS</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 556 SENIOR FRAUD PROTECTION&lt;br&gt;SB 1288 UNIVERSAL EARLY CHILD CARE PROGRAM</td>
<td><strong>PRO-CHOICE PROTECTIONS</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 34 PROTECTION OF WOMEN&lt;br&gt;SB 254 PICKETING OR PROTESTING IN OR NEAR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES&lt;br&gt;SB 256 PREGNANCY SUPPORT AND WELLNESS SERVICES</td>
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<td><strong>ENVIRONMENT</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 36 WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING PLAN&lt;br&gt;SB 338 SAFE WATERWAYS ACT</td>
<td><strong>MENTAL HEALTH</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 164 MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SHORTAGES</td>
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<td><strong>safe</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ADDRESSING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 98 COMMUNITY VIOLENCE TASK FORCE</td>
<td><strong>EDUCATION</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 1414 FREEDOM TO LEARN ACT&lt;br&gt;SB 344 REQUIRED INSTRUCTION IN THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS</td>
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<td><strong>GUN CONTROL</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 180 BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR BULLETS&lt;br&gt;SB 176 FIREARM STORAGE</td>
<td><strong>HEALTH</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 1404 HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT</td>
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<td><strong>VOTING RIGHTS</strong>&lt;br&gt;SB 1522 FLORIDA VOTING RIGHTS ACT</td>
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WE’RE HIGHLIGHTING SEVERAL OF OUR SESSION PRIORITIES:

**SB 64 LANDLORDS AND TENANTS**

**SB 1244 KEEP FLORIDIANS HOUSED ACT**

**HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT** - FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS ARE FIGHTING FOR RENTER PROTECTIONS ON ALL FRONTS - FROM REQUIRING AIR CONDITIONING IN EVERY RENTAL, REQUIRING REASONABLE RENT TO HAVING A STATE DEPARTMENT FOCUSED ON THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF FLORIDA RENTERS AND TENANTS.

**SB 64**, FILED BY SENATOR ROSALIND OSGOOD AND **SB 1244**, SPONSORED BY SENATOR VICTOR TORRES FOCUS ON THESE RENTER FRIENDLY POLICIES.

**SB 1414 FREEDOM TO LEARN ACT**

**SB 1404 HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT**

**EMPOWERING FREEDOM**- FLORIDA SENATE DEMOCRATS SEEK TO REPEAL EDUCATION CONSTRAINTS SUCH AS BOOK BANS AND CURRICULUM CHANGES. THEY ALSO AIM TO RESTORE HEALTH CARE ACCESS BY REPEALING RESTRICTIONS ON ABORTION CARE, TRANS CARE, AND MANY OTHER FORMS OF HEALTH CARE.

**SB 1414**, FILED BY SENATOR TRACIE DAVIS AND **SB 1244**, FILED BY SENATOR SHEVRIN JONES

STAY TUNED TO OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER FOR MORE HIGHLIGHTS!
For years, Senator Geraldine Thompson has filed legislation to expand Medicaid in Florida. With the Senate President prioritizing access to Florida’s health care system, Senator Thompson and other Democratic lawmakers got the chance to share with Republicans the benefits of closing the coverage gap for vulnerable Floridians.

Over 600,000 Floridians do not qualify for health insurance through Medicaid or Marketplace tax credits - this includes veterans, working parents, and low-wage workers!

41 other states have passed Medicaid - North Carolina just did it last year!

Studies have found that Medicaid expansion makes it easier for enrollees to look for work and less likely that they would need to borrow money or miss other payments due to medical bills.

Sources: Florida Policy Institute, Health Care for Florida
HERE’S A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE BAD BILLS WE’RE WATCHING THAT TARGET FLORIDIANS’ RIGHT TO LIVE A STRONG, HEALTHY, SAFE AND FREE LIFE:

**HB 49/SB 1596 - Employment and Curfew of Minors**
This bill removes work-based restrictions for 16 and 17 year-olds - undoing child labor protections that could negatively impact children’s health, academics and protections from business exploitations.

**HB 901/SB 1120 - Pride Flag Ban**
This culture war bill is back - it targets pro-social justice and pro-equality movements, banning local governments from flying flags in public buildings that represent political, racial, and LGBTQ viewpoints.

**HB 395/SB 1122 - Confederate Monuments**
Under the guise of “protecting history”, this bill prohibits local governments from removing monuments or memorials, threatening violators with fines and potential removal from office.

**HB 433/SB 1492 - Employment Protections Preemption**
This legislation bans local governments from establishing workplace protections - like minimum wage standards catered to their communities’ needs - and heat exposure protections.

**HB 599/SB 1382 - Don’t Say Gay 3.0**
Once again, republicans are targeting the LGBTQ+ community - but instead of pretending like these bills are to protect children, they’re saying the quiet part out loud. This bill expands don’t say gay to grown adults working in state government and potentially private businesses.

YOU MAY HAVE HEARD ABOUT BILLS TO LOWER THE AGE OF SALE FOR FIREARMS OR COMPLETELY BAN ABORTION WITH NO EXCEPTIONS. SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP HAS SAID THEY DO NOT SUPPORT THESE BILLS.
COMMUNITY IDS

During Week 2, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard SB 1174 - Identification Documents, which bans counties from accepting ID cards that are also offered to undocumented immigrants. Instead of offering real and direct solutions to issues affecting Floridians like skyrocketing property insurance and health care costs, Republicans are once again focused on attacking vulnerable communities that give back to the economy.

“You can’t take away someone’s identity in this way when they’re trying to exist - they’re here.”

Leader Lauren Book

“It may affect people beyond the immigrants - ID’s are just a critical part of our society and we need to recognize that in order to even function, we have to have an identification.”

Senator Linda Stewart
LGBTQ+ advocates joined lawmakers at the Capitol to speak against bills and policies that target their communities.

Bills like Don’t Say Gay 3.0 (HB 599/SB 1382) and the Pride Flag Ban (HB 901/SB 1120) further target and divide Floridians based on who they are and who they love.

“BANNING BOOKS DOES NOT BAN LGBTQ YOUTH, AND IT WILL NOT ELIMINATE THEM.”
Senator Tracie Davis
SB 158 – Value of Motor Vehicles Exempt from Legal Process
- Senator Polsky
Increases the value of an exempt motor vehicle from $1,000 to $5,000.

SB 86 – Hope Cards for Persons Issued Orders of Protection
- Leader Book
Creates the Hope Card program for orders of protection, identifying those protected by the order to better facilitate law enforcement response to violations of the order.

SB 712 – Public Records/County Attorneys and City Attorney
- Senator Powell
Provides an exemption from public records requirements for the personal identifying and location information of current or former county attorneys.

Expands the exception for when grand jury testimony or evidence may be disclosed.

SB 558 – Homeless Service Professionals – Senator Rouson
Creates a process for former homeless individuals to become certified to provide support services for those currently experiencing homelessness.

SB 46 – Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program – Senator Stewart
Makes the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) tutoring program for flexible for school districts, from offering after the school day tutoring and providing stipends to tutors.

DEMOCRATIC BILLS ON THE MOVE

JIMMY BUFFET HIGHWAY

STATE ROAD A1A COULD SOON BE CALLED “JIMMY BUFFET HIGHWAY”, IN HONOR OF THE LEGENDARY SINGER-SONGWRITER AND ACTIVIST WHO PASSED AWAY FROM SKIN CANCER IN 2023.

LEADER LAUREN BOOK’S BILL (SB 84) WOULD DESIGNATE THE ENTIRETY OF STATE ROAD A1A – FROM DUVAL TO MONROE COUNTY – IN HONOR OF THE LATE LEGENDARY SINGER WHO REMINDED US THAT “IT’S 5 O’CLOCK SOMEWHERE”.

2024 Legislative Session Newsletter, Volume 2, Issue 1
SB 556
SENIOR FRAUD PROTECTION

THIS BILL, SPONSORED BY SENATOR ROUSON, AIMS TO SAFEGUARD INDIVIDUALS OVER 65 AND OTHER VULNERABLE ADULTS FROM FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION.

SB 298 by Senator Polsky—Saltwater Intrusion Vulnerability Assessments
Allows the Department of Environmental Protection to provide grants to coastal counties to conduct vulnerability assessments analyzing the effects of saltwater intrusion on their water supplies and the preparedness to respond to such a threat.

SB 906 by Senator Rouson—Public Records/Appellate Court Clerks
Creates a public record exemption for the personal identifying information of current appellate court clerks, their spouses and children.

SB 44 by Senator Stewart—Public Restroom Requirements
Directs the Florida Building Commission to add the installation of a hook in wheelchair accessible public restroom facilities to the Florida Building Code.

SB 732 by Senator Powell—Theft from Nonprofit Organizations
Reclassifies theft offenses from nonprofit organizations.

SB 550 by Senator Rouson—Transparency for Autism-related Services
 Requires the Agency for Persons with Disabilities to provide denied applicants the specific criteria that has not been met for eligibility.

SB 558 by Senator Rouson—Homeless Service Professionals
Creates a process for former homeless individuals to become certified to provide support services to those currently experiencing homelessness.

SB 106 by Senator Jones—Acceptance of Cash Payments by Businesses
Requires certain businesses to accept payment in cash.