



Good Morning!

Voting is a fundamental right for every U.S. citizen. Protecting the integrity of Florida's elections is a vital function of Florida's government. In support of this mission, the Florida Legislature provided \$11.4 million to the Department of State for election's cybersecurity training, infrastructure and security improvement.

As a reminder, this year's Primary and General Election deadlines are quickly approaching. If you have not already registered to vote, I encourage you to follow [this link](#) for instructions on how to register to vote in the Primary Election before the July 20th deadline. If you are unable to register before July 20th, you must register to vote in the General Election by October 5th.

I consider it a great honor to represent District 17. Please share [this link](#) with your friends and family so that they too can sign up for the [Mayfield Minute](#). 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!

Legislation Signed to Honor Veterans & Military Families

We have a responsibility to our men and women in uniform to make Florida the most Military and Veteran friendly state in the nation. During the 2020 Session, the Florida Legislature worked to ensure our Veterans receive the recognition, benefits and protection they deserve.

I am proud that this year the Brevard Legislative Delegation was able to secure \$190,000 to support the National Veterans Homeless Support (NVHS) organization. These funds will be used to support a search and rescue program; provide emergency, transitional and permanent housing; and support services for our Veterans in need.

The following bills to support our Veterans and Military families were also recently signed into law:

[House Bill \(HB\) 171: Postsecondary Education for Certain Military Personnel](#) requires specified postsecondary institutions to waive the transcript fee for active duty members of the United States Armed Forces, certain veterans, and their spouses and dependents.

[HB 877: Surviving Spouse Ad Valorem Tax Reduction](#) proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to allow the homestead property tax discount for disabled veterans to transfer to a veteran's surviving spouse upon the death of the veteran, provided the

veteran had received the discount. The discount is available for veterans aged 65 or older who have permanent, combat-related disabilities.

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 662: Education and the Military](#) gives greater flexibility to transitioning students from military families by considering a student a resident of the school district at the point in time in which the parent is transferred to a military installation within the state, for purposes of enrollment and preferential treatment in special programs.

[HB 205: Unlawful Use of Uniforms, Medals, or Insignia](#) specifies that the material gain from a person unlawfully misrepresenting themselves as a member or veteran of the US Armed Forces by wearing a military uniform, medals, or insignia, includes obtaining paid employment or public office. Specifies that a person who violates this provision commits a third degree felony, punishable by up to 5 years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

[SB 936: Disability Retirement Benefits](#) improves access to benefits for disabled veterans by easing proof of disability requirements for a veteran in the Florida Retirement System who is receiving care at a federal Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facility. Currently, a veteran is required to receive certification of proof of total and permanent disability from physicians licensed in Florida or the state in which the veteran works. This legislation will allow a veteran to obtain proof of disability from a VHA physician regardless of the state that the physician is licensed in.

[HB 61: Adoption Benefits](#) provides incentives for veterans and military members to adopt children from the state's child-welfare system. This legislation expands a program that provides incentives to state employees to adopt children. State employees can receive a one-time benefit of \$10,000 for the adoption of a child with special needs and \$5,000 for adoption of a child without special needs. The bill makes those benefits available to veterans and military members as well.

Supporting Our First Responders

Every day we rely on the courage and bravery of our first responders to help us through emergencies. It is more apparent now than ever before that Florida's heroic public servants are vital to our communities and it is our duty to support them in every way we can. This year the Florida Legislature passed legislation to ensure we are doing everything we can to protect their health and safety in return.

Recently, Governor Ron DeSantis signed the following legislation into law:

[SB 1092: Fire Prevention and Control](#) creates the Firefighter Cancer Decontamination Equipment Grant Program within the Division of State Fire Marshal to provide Florida's firefighters with the resources and equipment needed to decontaminate from the estimated 90,000 chemicals in the firefighting environment.

[HB 573: First Responders and Correctional Officers](#) aims to build a support system within the first responder community, and address mental health among first responders, by allowing for confidentiality between first responders who seek personal and professional support from their peers.

[SB 476: Law Enforcement Vehicles](#) ensures law enforcement have the ability to park their patrol cars at home without fear of penalties from HOAs or condo associations.

[SB 7012: Mental Health & Substance Abuse](#) creates the First Responders Suicide Deterrence Task force, which will make recommendations on how to reduce suicide

among employed or retired first responders in the state. Recommendations will include identifying or developing training programs and materials that will help first responders cope with personal life stressors; Promote mutual support and solidarity amongst first responders; Train managers and supervisors to identify suicidal risk; and educate first responders on suicide awareness and how to seek help.

District 17 Highlights

Brevard County Emergency Operation Center

The Brevard County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is the most frequently activated in the state and one of the most frequently activated in the nation, largely due to the number of space launches and launch attempts. The current Emergency Operations Center is more than fifty years old and has been in need of improvements and more space for some time now.

I am proud to announce that during the 2020 Session the Brevard County Legislative Delegation successfully secured **\$1,000,000 to support the completion of Phase 1 of the Brevard County EOC Construction**. This funding provides for the complete pre-construction site work for the new EOC for Brevard County.

The Brevard EOC's purpose is to provide centralized response and recovery decisions, plans, and operational activities to support our community. In addition to emergency communication, preparedness, training and mitigation, the EOC also houses the secondary 911 answering point which dispatches emergency medical response throughout the county and fire response in all areas of the county.

To start receiving emergency alerts and important safety messages from the EOC text BrevardEOC to 888777.

Indian River County School District Equity in Action

This past week I had the pleasure of meeting with Indian River County School District Superintendent Dr. David Moore. Dr. Moore shared that the District's schools will be opening on schedule with virtual distance learning options for families who are not comfortable with their student returning to the traditional classroom yet. There will also be a transitional distance learning option available for students who would like the opportunity to transition back into the traditional classroom after the first nine weeks.

In addition to preparing for the 2020-2021 School Year with added protections to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the School District will be hosting their first Equity Conference this week. The conference is part of the District's "Project Re-Envision 2025" which is working to ensure that all students and staff have a sense of belonging and acceptance.

Equity in Action
Friday, July 24th 7:30 AM - 2:30 PM
Storm Grove Middle School
6400 57th St, Vero Beach

For questions or to RSVP, please contact Dr. Deborah Taylor-Long at (772) 564-3026 or email Deborah.Long@indianriverschools.org.

Follow me on Facebook and Twitter, and visit my [Senate website](#)



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