



THE BERMAN BRIEFING

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SENATE DISTRICT 31



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Whip

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Education

Environment and Natural Resources

Dear Friends & Neighbors,

February 2020

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to my Tallahassee office or email me at Berman.Lori.Web@flsenate.gov.

Bill Action Update

I presented our Purple Alert to its second committee reference - Children, Families, and Elder Affairs...where it passed! With only one committee stop remaining - Rules - this bill is getting closer to a floor vote.

Beach Access Press Conference

Additionally, I attended and spoke at a press conference on customary use. In 2018, the Florida Legislature passed a bill that prevented local governments from enacting "customary use ordinances," or local ordinances that recognize, regulate, and protect existing public beach access rights. The Florida Supreme Court in the 70's recognized the significance of customary use rights because the public's access to beaches has been ancient, reasonable, and without interruption.

In response to this troublesome legislation, I filed a bill to repeal the statute with my colleague, Representative Evan Jenne. Our bill will restore a local government's ability to enact customary use ordinances and put the interests of the public before wealthy beachfront property owners.



Standing with Representative Evan Jenne regarding SB 1680/HB 6063, to repeal the so-called "beach access" bill.

Anniversary of the 19th Amendment

2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment, an achievement that finally gave validity to America's promise that "the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged."

We marked the occasion with a breakfast on the 22nd floor, hosted by Representative Emily Slosberg. Many influential female legislators were honored with an award.

As we celebrate a century of a woman's right to vote, we should look back and remember the blood, sweat, and tears spent to bring us to this moment. Susan B. Anthony, Alice Paul, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Ida B. Wells -- these pioneers of equality represent only a handful of influential women that fought tirelessly for the vote, for the idea that "there will never be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers."

But we have further to go. Women have yet to secure certain rights and opportunities. Virginia only recently became the 38th state in our union to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, first proposed by the National Women's Party in 1923. I'm committed to the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment -- we must enshrine the legality of the sexes in our constitution.

*Accepting the Edna
Giles Fuller Award
from Representative
Emily Slosberg*



Budget

The Senate and House have unanimously passed their budget proposals, which will kick-start budget conference to work out some of the key differences -- the Senate's budget includes \$92.8 billion in spending, while the House proposed a leaner \$91.4 billion plan.

One difference is in funding for the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The Senate offered \$387 million while the House came under at \$144 million. The more money that is dedicated to this trust fund, the closer we'll get to fixing Florida's affordable housing crisis. The Senate also proposed \$125 million for the conservationist Florida Forever Program, while the House proposed a mere \$20 million.

The priorities between these two legislative bodies could not be more apparent, and I'm happy to be in the more reasoned chamber.

Lori Berman, State Senator District 31