



Happy New Year!

As we look back on the events of 2020, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your State Senator. I feel truly blessed to have the honor to represent all of the citizens who make District 17 home.

I look forward to a promising 2021 full of opportunities for our citizens, visitors and businesses. From my family to yours, we wish you a very Happy New Year!

In light of the holiday, all state offices will be closed December 31st and January 1st.

I consider it a great honor to represent all of the citizens and visitors of 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!

Florida Cuts Debt by \$1.4 Billion

The Florida Division of Bond Finance released their annual Debt report this week. This report reviews the changes in the States Debt position from the past year. It also shows how future debt service payments, debt issuance, and revenue projections will affect the State's benchmark debt ratio.

The report also provides information on matters important to the State's credit ratings like pension liabilities and reserves. It also evaluates developments in alternative financing techniques that are used by the State including public private partnerships and university direct support organizations.

Total State direct debt outstanding as of June 30, 2020, was \$19.2 billion. This is a \$1.4 billion decrease from the prior fiscal year and continues a downward trend which began in 2011.

"The state is well positioned with significant debt capacity available to fund critical infrastructure needs...However, available debt capacity and the ration are sensitive to revenue declines from economic weakness such as those precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic." The report stated.

Despite the pandemic's impact on state revenues, Florida continues to have a triple-A bond rating. To view the report click here: [2020 Debt Report](#)

Important COVID-19 Vaccine Facts

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released the following important facts regarding the COVID -19 vaccine. Accurate information is critical now that a authorized

and recommended vaccine is available.

- **FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19**
 - None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. There are several different types of vaccines in development. However, the goal for each of them is to teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. Sometimes this process can cause symptoms, such as fever. These symptoms are normal and are a sign that the body is building immunity.
 - It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it's possible a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and get sick. This is because the vaccine has not had enough time to provide protection.
- **FACT: COVID-19 vaccines will not cause you to test positive on COVID-19 viral tests**
 - Vaccines currently in clinical trials in the United States will not cause you to test positive on viral tests, which are used to see if you have a current infection.
 - If your body develops an immune response, which is the goal of vaccination, there is a possibility you may test positive on some antibody tests. Antibody tests indicate you had a previous infection and that you may have some level of protection against the virus. Experts are currently looking at how COVID-19 vaccination may affect antibody testing results.
- **FACT: People who have had COVID-19 may still benefit from receiving the vaccine**
 - Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before.
 - At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from becoming sick again after recovering from COVID-19. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long.
 - We will not know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have a vaccine and more data on how well it works.
 - Both natural immunity and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about, and CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.
- **FACT: Being vaccinated can help prevent you from getting sick with COVID-19**
 - While many people with COVID-19 have only a mild illness, others may get a severe illness or they may even die.
 - There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, even if you are not at increased risk of severe complications. If you get sick, you also may spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you while you are sick. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you by creating an antibody response without having to experience sickness.
- **FACT: Receiving an mRNA vaccine will not alter your DNA**
 - mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid and can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA).
 - The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease.

Learn more about how COVID -19 vaccines work by clicking [here](#). I will continue to provide updates on important information regarding the vaccine as they become available.

District 17 Highlights

Youth Mentoring Opportunities in Indian River County

As you begin thinking about your New Year's resolutions, remember that January is Youth Mentoring Month. Mentoring makes a positive impact in the lives of our youth. Statistics have shown that youth with mentors have more self confidence and increased high school graduation rates.

There are many opportunities to volunteer as a mentor in Indian River County. Please contact one of the following organizations to volunteer your time to make a difference in a life of a child:

- [Gifford Youth Achievement Center](#) (772) 794-1005
 - [Youth Guidance Mentoring Academy](#) (772) 492-3933
 - [Boys and Girls Club of Indian River County](#) (772) 770-6000
 - [Take Stock in Children](#) (772) 462-7252
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2020 Hispanic Heritage Month Student and Teacher Contest Winners

First Lady Casey DeSantis has announced the Hispanic Heritage Month student contest winners and Excellence in Education Award recipients. This year's theme was "Celebrating Untold Stories and Contributions of Hispanic Americans in Florida." Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated every year in Florida from September 15 through October 15.

Jackson Breeden who attends Holy Trinity Episcopal Academy in Brevard County was named one of the Student Essay Contest Winners. Jackson's essay, titled "Maria Mestre de los Dolores Andreu Lit the Way", highlights how Florida's first female Hispanic American member of the U.S. Coast Guard and first female St. Augustine lightkeeper paved the way in a position typically not held by women at that point in history.

Libna Sierra, who teaches at the Master's Academy of Vero Beach in Indian River County was named one of the Excellence in Education Award winners. Originally from Campeche, Mexico, Libna enjoys sharing her heritage and culture with students so that they can appreciate the Spanish language and culture. Not only does Libna contribute to Master's Academy of Vero Beach as a Spanish and Technology teacher, but she volunteers in the community to assist Hispanic families.

The student essay winners earned a four year Florida College Plan scholarship, which was provided by the Florida Prepaid College Foundation. To view a full list of the award recipients, please click on the following link: [2020 Hispanic Heritage Student & Teacher Award Winners](#)

Beach Restoration Approved

Indian River County Commissioner awarded a \$12 million contract to restore 3.7 miles of storm eroded beach and dunes. This project will begin in January and is located north of route 510.

Beach restoration is needed after a shoreline has been severally eroded. Our coastline has been impacted by multiple hurricanes over the last couple years, and the beaches

have suffered. In order to mitigate the impact, 307,000 cubic yards of sand will be spread along the shoreline, along with 200,000 native dune plants that will be planted in time for the start of sea turtle nesting season on April 30.

The project will be divided into two phases. Phase one will run from Seaview subdivision south to Wabasso Beach Park. Phase two is projected to run from Wabasso Beach Park south to Turtle Trail and its expected be put out to bid in summer 2021 with construction being completed by April 2022.

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Contact Information

Melbourne Office

900 E. Strawbridge Ave.
Melbourne, FL 32901
(321) 409-2025
Staff: [Yvette Campbell](#)
[Kaitlyn Currey](#)

Tallahassee Office

322 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100
(850) 487-5017

Vero Beach Office

Administration Building B
1801 27th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960
(772) 226-1970
Staff: [Jacob Dimond](#)
