



November 3, 2026 Voter Guide

The League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area, is a nonpartisan organization that encourages participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, & influences policy through education & advocacy.

Voting In Pinellas County - Facts to Know

You are eligible if you are:

- a U.S. Citizen, age 18 years or older, and a resident of the county in which you are registering (unless your right to vote has been taken away by a judge/act of law).
- If you are 16 or 17 years old, you can pre-register to vote!
- If you are a Returning Citizen who has questions about your eligibility, here is an information resource that may be helpful: <https://campaignlegal.org/restoreyourvote>

To vote in Pinellas County, you can register or check your registration status:

- Online or by mail at <https://registertovoteflorida.gov/home>
- In-person at Election Offices:
 - 315 Court St, Room 117, Clearwater, FL
 - 13001 Starkey Rd, Starkey Lakes Corporate Center, Largo, FL
 - 501 First Ave N, St. Petersburg, FL
- Department of Motor Vehicle offices, Tax Collector offices or any public library

The last day you can register to vote is 29 days before the election you want to vote in. So, make sure you register or double-check your registration at least 1 month before Election Day!

Want to Vote-by-Mail? There are 5 ways to request a vote-by-mail ballot:

- Pinellas County Online: [Fill out the online Mail Ballot Request Form](#)
- Call the Supervisor of Elections Office at 727-464-8683
- Email: [Complete and sign this form](mailto:MailBallot@VotePinellas.gov) and send a scanned copy to MailBallot@VotePinellas.gov
- Mail: [Complete and sign this form](#) Mail it to Supervisor of Elections, 13001 Starkey Rd., Largo, FL 33773
- In Person at one of the three Supervisor of Elections Offices listed above

Voting in Person? Here's a list of acceptable forms of identification:

- Florida driver license
- Florida identification card issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles
- United States passport
- Debit or credit card
- Military identification
- Student identification
- Retirement center identification
- Neighborhood association identification
- Public assistance identification
- Veteran health identification card issued by the US Department of Veterans Affairs
- License to carry a concealed weapon for firearm issued pursuant to s. 790.06, F.S.
- Employee ID issued by the Federal Government, the state, a county, or a municipality

Any problems voting? Call the nationwide non-partisan Election Protection hotline at 866-OUR VOTE.

Important Dates to Remember

- **Register to Vote by:** October 5 2026
- **Request Mail-in-Ballot mailed to you by:** October 22 at 5:00 pm
- **Early Voting Begins:** Early Voting: October 19 to November 1
- **Election Day:** Tuesday, November 3, 2026
- **Polls are open from** 7am to 7pm on November 3, 2026
- **Mail-in-Ballot must be received by:** Tuesday, November 3, 7:00pm

Research Your Ballot!
Use this Voter Guide OR go to Vote411.org to use the interactive Voter Guide!



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Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners Dist 2 At Large

Seven commissioners sit on the Board of County Commissioners in Pinellas County. Three of the commissioners are elected at-large (which means they are voted on by all county residents) and four are elected by the registered voters within each single-member district. The Board governs all unincorporated areas of the county, and is responsible for setting the millage rate (the amount of tax levied on real estate or other property) for the entire county. The Board approves the budgets of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Sheriff, and the Supervisor of Elections, and serves as the Emergency Medical Services authority, the Fire Protection authority, the Countywide Planning authority, the Water & Navigation Control authority, and also manages countywide Mosquito Control Services.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$126,507/year

For a detailed video explanation of the role of County Commissioner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbnrPcwEB-E>



Tim Hughes

Party: Democratic

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Campaign Email: tim@hughes4pinellas.com

Campaign Phone: 727-477-1864

Campaign Mailing Address: 17 S Cirrus Ave Clearwater FL 33765

Education: BA Environmental Health and Safety, AS Environmental Studies

Professional Experience: 30 years in the field of Environmental Health and Safety

Public Service: 20 years in Watershed Management Branch, Environmental Management Division of a County Public Works Department

Facebook: www.facebook.com/tim.hughes.sr.2025/

How will you balance the demands for economic development against the impact of rising sea levels and the need for environmental protections?

In Pinellas these demands are the same balance sheet and not opposing forces. Flooding risks are the largest driver of insurance costs and business interruption here, and red tide closes beaches, empties hotels and cancels charters. Protecting our natural resource is protecting our economy. Development projects require assessments independent of the , thirty-year lifecycle cost, and resilience standards. Redevelop on land already zoned for it that meets real resilience standards, RESUME HERE: I oppose high-density building in high-hazard flood zones that does not. Housing that becomes uninsurable in a decade is not affordable; it is a deferred bill. Reduce measured flood risk, document it for FEMA's CRS, and every employer's costs fall.

Reducing or eliminating property taxes is being considered by the governor and the legislature. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? How should the county respond if changes are made?

Ad valorem revenue funds the sheriff, EMS, fire, emergency management, parks, and stormwater work. Removing it without a real replacement means cuts, and the first things cut are always preventive: inspection, drainage maintenance, sewer rehabilitation. That is not savings. Deferred maintenance returns as flooded businesses, sewage backups and higher premiums. If the state moves, Pinellas should quantify the impact service by service before any vote, publish it, and protect public safety and water infrastructure first. Then pursue state and federal grants aggressively, and cut duplication between the county and twenty-four municipalities through shared services and joint procurement on drainage and stormwater.

Describe the top two challenges facing the county over the next five years. How do you propose to address these?

First, flood and storm risk and the insurance costs that follow. More than half of Pinellas residents live in a floodplain, and our stormwater systems were overwhelmed twice in 2024. I would establish an inter-governmental resiliency task force, fund a countywide GIS mapping every stormwater and drainage system, prioritize inspection, outfalls, pump stations and I&I abatement, then take verified risk reduction to FEMA's Community Rating System for premium discounts. Second, affordable housing near work. I would lead a public-private plan converting aging, storm-vulnerable mobile home parks into resilient condominium communities using SHIP, SAIL and Sadowski dollars, with current residents given first option to buy or rent.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and county governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

For routine business regulation my default is deference. A company operating in Clearwater, Largo and Pinellas Park should not face three rulebooks; I would harmonize with the state framework and our neighbors. The balance is wrong where local conditions differ materially from the average. Pinellas is Florida's most densely populated county, more than half of us live in a floodplain, and we absorbed a five-to-eight-foot surge. On floodplain management, stormwater design, coastal construction and water quality, a state minimum is a floor, not a ceiling. That is exactly what FEMA's CRS rewards. Home rule should be preserved where a documented local hazard exists that the state standard was not written to address.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) expenditures do not currently require a public referendum. If over \$100 million in TIF funds is committed to one project, should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

Yes, at a commitment of that size. TIF is public money, future tax revenue pledged decades ahead, and a single project over \$100 million is a bond-scale decision that binds commissioners not yet elected and residents who never voted on it. I would support a referendum requirement at a defined threshold, paired with independent verification of the projected return by

someone other than the party seeking the money, a full lifecycle and resilience accounting, and outreach to affected neighborhoods and the local business community before the commitment, not after. Routine, smaller TIF work should stay with the elected board. The goal is not to stop redevelopment; it is to make our largest commitments transparent.

Public transportation is limited in Pinellas County. How will you work to improve access for the entire county?

Pinellas runs mostly empty full-size buses on too few routes. I would support PSTA in right-sizing the fleet with efficient mini-buses, adding stops and routes where the need is greatest, and extending hours for shift workers in hospitality, healthcare and logistics service that ends before their shift does is service they cannot use. I would invest in first-mile and last-mile access: safe walkways, ADA crosswalks, bike lanes and shaded shelters. In our climate an unshaded stop is a barrier. I would update land-use codes on US-19, SR-60 and Central Avenue for transit-oriented development, and pursue Penny for Pinellas and a TDT change to fund regional light rail from TPA to downtown Tampa, Clearwater and St. Pete.



Brian Scott

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Education: Seminole High School, St. Pete College, USF St. Petersburg Bayboro Campus

Professional Experience: President CEO of Escot Bus Lines, President TRAX Insurance, LTD., Chairman United Motorcoach Association, International Motorcoach Group, Florida Motorcoach Association

Public Service: Pinellas County Commission, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, Forward Pinellas, Tampa Bay Water, Historic Preservation, Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged, Parks and Conservation Advisory Board

Facebook: www.facebook.com/vote4brianscott/

How will you balance the demands for economic development against the impact of rising sea levels and the need for environmental protections?

I believe we can address both simultaneously. In Pinellas, the environment is the economy; nobody visits, builds, or invests in a county that lets its beaches wash away or its neighborhoods flood. That is why we completed a \$125.7 million emergency renourishment that placed 2.5 million cubic yards of sand along 35 miles of coastline, secured a landmark cost-sharing agreement with the Army Corps, and are developing a countywide stormwater master plan with federal mitigation dollars. Growth must also pay its own way: developers should fund the infrastructure their projects require, and we preserved places like Gladys Douglas and West Klosterman forever. Disciplined budgets and smart, resilient investment protect both.

Reducing or eliminating property taxes is being considered by the governor and the legislature. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? How should the county respond if changes are made?

Whatever happens in November, my approach is the same: keep cutting the property tax rate, as we have 4 of the last 5 years, saving taxpayers over \$100 million, while fully funding public safety. If property taxes are reduced or eliminated, the county must respond like a business. Start with discretionary spending, freeze open positions, and stress-test every department for 10 percent savings before ever touching essential services. Consolidating duplicative services can save even more. The state must also give counties flexibility to replace revenue: user fees, indexing local fuel taxes to inflation, or sales tax options voters approve. We keep Pinellas affordable by cutting waste, fraud, and abuse, not by asking taxpayers for more.

Describe the top two challenges facing the county over the next five years. How do you propose to address these?

Affordability and storm resilience. Too many families and seniors are being priced out by housing, insurance, and tax bills. I will keep cutting the property tax rate, keep cutting waste, and make it cheaper and faster to build and rebuild, with more than 30 types of inspections moving online by the end of 2026. On resilience, Helene and Milton showed what is at stake. As Chairman, I led the county's recovery, stood up the \$813 million People First disaster relief program, restored 35 miles of beaches, and secured an Army Corps cost-sharing agreement so Pinellas is not paying alone when the next storm hits. Our work is far from over: a countywide stormwater master plan and hardened infrastructure so we recover faster when it counts.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and county governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

Partnership beats turf wars. The state has been a strong partner for Pinellas on hurricane recovery and beach renourishment, and issues like insurance and water clearly cross county lines. But county government is closest to the people. Local quality-of-life decisions, like short-term rentals, noise, land use, transportation, mobility and neighborhood character, are best made here at home, where residents can look their commissioners in the eye at a public meeting. We updated our short-term rental and noise ordinances because residents asked us to; that responsiveness is exactly what home rule protects. Where preemption goes too far, I make Pinellas's case directly to our delegation. Both levels should stay in their lanes and serve the same

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) expenditures do not currently require a public referendum. If over \$100 million in TIF funds is committed to one project, should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

TIF dollars are tax dollars, and \$100 million is real money. I spent my career in business; nobody commits nine figures

without the owners signing off, and in government, the owners are the taxpayers. Pinellas already trusts voters with big decisions such as, renewing the Penny for Pinellas at the ballot every ten years, and that discipline makes projects better. So yes, I am open to voter approval for commitments of that scale. At a minimum, any project that size must earn its way through full transparency, independent financial analysis, performance benchmarks, and claw backs that protect taxpayers if a developer fails to deliver. A good project can win public support. If it cannot, that tells you something.

Public transportation is limited in Pinellas County. How will you work to improve access for the entire county?

Moving people is what I have done my whole career. I built Escot Bus Lines right here in Pinellas, served on PSTA's board as a citizen and now as a commissioner, and serve as vice chairman of Forward Pinellas and of the board serving our transportation disadvantaged neighbors. In 2025, we completed a redesign of the entire PSTA network to put service where riders are, while cutting PSTA's tax rate two years in a row. That is the model: real mobility solutions and better value for every taxpayer. Next, I want transit that connects workers to jobs countywide, technology like our \$20 million investment in advanced traffic management system moving everyone faster, and a regional MPO that finally competes for major federal dollars.

Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners Dist 6 Single Member

Seven commissioners sit on the Board of County Commissioners in Pinellas County. Three of the commissioners are elected at-large (which means they are voted on by all county residents) and four are elected by the registered voters within each single-member district. The Board governs all unincorporated areas of the county, and is responsible for setting the millage rate (the amount of tax levied on real estate or other property) for the entire county. The Board approves the budgets of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, the Sheriff, and the Supervisor of Elections, and serves as the Emergency Medical Services authority, the Fire Protection authority, the Countywide Planning authority, the Water & Navigation Control authority, and also manages countywide Mosquito Control Services.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$126,507/year

For a detailed video explanation of the role of County Commissioner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbnrPcwEB-E>



David Glenn Jr.

Party: Democratic

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Education: Associate in Arts, HCC, Tampa, FL - 1991; Bachelor of Science, FAMU, Tallahassee, FL - 1997; Bachelor of Architecture, FAMU, 1998; Masters of Architecture, USF, Tampa, FL-2000

Professional Experience: I have worked in the Architecture industry since 1998. I became a State of Florida Licensed Architect and Interior Designer in 2006. I am a registered Architect in nine other states.

Public Service: Former Member, PSTA Transit Advisory Committee; current Democratic Precinct Committee Person, Precinct #309; member of several 501(c)-3 civic organizations

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61585103768654

Twitter: [x.com/DGlennJrFor6](https://twitter.com/DGlennJrFor6)

Instagram: www.instagram.com/davidglennjr.for6/

How will you balance the demands for economic development against the impact of rising sea levels and the need for environmental protections?

Any new development will need to consider whether the required infrastructure (Storm water, potable water, sanitary sewer, etc.) is in place or part of the plan before construction begins. Also, we need to build more vertically in certain locations rather than out horizontally so that we can preserve more of our open and green spaces for people.

Reducing or eliminating property taxes is being considered by the governor and the legislature. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? How should the county respond if changes are made?

First, eliminating property taxes is not a viable option, especially for our coastal communities that rely on property taxes and tourism dollars to pay for essential services. My plan is to allow increased development in select areas that will increase the property rolls without increasing taxes and to promote and encourage more tourism into the county to generate more revenue. Then this additional revenue can be reinvested into the community to help pay for a variety of items including improvements to infrastructure, affordable housing, social services, public transit, and more.

Describe the top two challenges facing the county over the next five years. How do you propose to address these?

Attracting more people and families to move back into Pinellas County and upgrading our infrastructure while allowing for additional development. By providing additional affordable housing units, this should help to bring more people back into the county. The additional development will increase our property rolls, create new jobs for residents, and provide additional housing options for those people and families that we are trying to attract. Upgrades to the public transit will help connect these denser developments while providing transportation options for all of these new Pinellas County residents.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and county governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

Currently the state is trying to take control away from our Cities and Counties and move the control to the politicians in Tallahassee. Our local governments are much better suited and understand the issues that their residents face and generally, how to better spend the money to benefit the local residents. The power of the purse string should remain with the local Counties and Cities!

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) expenditures do not currently require a public referendum. If over \$100 million in TIF funds is committed to one project, should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

This is why it is so important to elect competent officials at all levels of government. However, you elect them for a reason, and that is to govern and represent their constituents. Let the elected leaders make the hard decisions. Too often, if you put too many things to a vote by the voters, it only delays a project that may very well be needed and completed in a timely manner. If there was a way to conduct a ballot referendum sooner than every 2 years, then it may be something to explore.

Public transportation is limited in Pinellas County. How will you work to improve access for the entire county?

A reorganization of the transit system is needed in the county with better connections to adjacent counties, connections to dense developments, and increase to the number of routes and increased frequencies where needed. We also need to continue the planning for a commuter rail network in Pinellas County that will be coordinated with the bus service and other modes of transportation. The current County Commission is attempting to dismantle the public transit system by eliminating routes and reducing frequencies that will make public transit less attractive to residents. This is totally counterproductive!



Kathleen Peters

Party: Republican

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Education: BA degree, Eckerd College in Human Development

Public Service: Pinellas County Commission since 2018

Facebook: www.facebook.com/VoteKathleenPeters

How will you balance the demands for economic development against the impact of rising sea levels and the need for environmental protections?

- candidate declined to respond -

Reducing or eliminating property taxes is being considered by the governor and the legislature. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? How should the county respond if changes are made?

- candidate declined to respond -

Describe the top two challenges facing the county over the next five years. How do you propose to address these?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and county governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) expenditures do not currently require a public referendum. If over \$100 million in TIF funds is committed to one project, should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

- candidate declined to respond -

Public transportation is limited in Pinellas County. How will you work to improve access for the entire county?

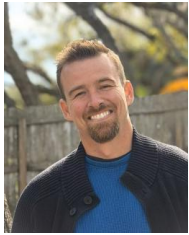
- candidate declined to respond -

Pinellas County School Board Member Dist 3 At Large

The Pinellas County School Board is responsible for the administration of the county's schools in accordance with state law and the rules put forth by the State Board of Education. The School Board adopts policies and sets priorities for the district. It also adopts and oversees the annual budget, hires and evaluates the superintendent, and manages the collective bargaining process for employees of the district. The School Board consists of seven members: three who are elected at-large (which means they are voted on by all county residents) and four who are elected by the registered voters within each single-member district. All seven Board members will represent the entire district upon their election. The Board appoints a superintendent who serves as chief administrative officer of Pinellas County Schools. The Board also employs the School Board Attorney, who reports directly to the Board.

Term: 4 Years **Salary:** \$56,360/year

Click here to view the June 29th, 2026 School Board Candidate forum: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZP0U_Ouh70



Curtis Campogni

Party: Non Partisan

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Campaign Phone: 407-319-2068

Campaign Mailing Address: 3334 Briarwood Cir 3334 Briarwood Cir Safety Harbor, Florida FL 34695

Education: Bachelor of Science in Psychology.

Professional Experience: Founder of Speak4MC. National speaker, trainer, author, and consultant. More than 15 years of experience serving at-risk youth and families through workforce development, child welfare, juvenile justice, and community-based programs. Former youth care worker, case manager, and program manager.

Public Service: Vice Chair, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Circuit 6 Advisory Board. Florida representative to the Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA). Pinellas County Schools mentor. Volunteer speaker and trainer for community organizations. Advocate for youth, families, foster care & workforce development.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Curtis4allpcs/

Twitter: x.com/curtis4allpcs

Instagram: www.instagram.com/curtis4allpcs/

How do you compare the results of charter schools, private schools and public schools in the county? How will you ensure that public schools remain viable with adequate funding in this age of vouchers?

Public, charter, and private schools all serve students, but they operate under different rules and responsibilities, making direct comparisons difficult. My role as a School Board member is not to criticize families for the choices they make, but to ensure Pinellas County Schools remains a system families want to choose. Strong public schools benefit everyone. They support local economies, attract families, strengthen communities, and prepare the future workforce. This issue is personal to me. My children attend public schools, and my mother is a public school teacher. I will be an unapologetic advocate for a strong and well-funded public school system. Voucher programs should have reasonable income limits and include transparency.

What are your top 3 priorities for the district and what specific action will you take to address each of them?

My top three priorities are teacher support, enrollment, and community partnerships. First, I will advocate for competitive teacher pay, support referendums that fund compensation, and reduce unnecessary burdens so teachers can focus on teaching. Just as importantly, I will listen to educators and ensure their voices are part of the conversation. Second, I will address declining enrollment by rebuilding trust in public education, expanding outreach, and evaluating school models that better meet families' needs. Third, I will strengthen partnerships between schools, businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations to expand opportunities and connect families with resources beyond what schools can provide alone.

Teachers and other staffing shortages are a pervasive problem. What suggestions do you have for improving recruitment and retention of staff?

Teacher and staff shortages will not be solved by recruitment alone. We must focus on both recruitment and retention. My approach is simple: hear them, empower them, and pay them. We must continue advocating for competitive compensation through state funding, local referendums, and responsible budgeting. We also need to ensure educators and staff feel heard, respected, and supported. Too often, teachers are expected to be instructors, administrators, and behavioral specialists all at once. Retention improves when employees feel valued and have the tools to succeed. Recruitment improves when current employees tell others that Pinellas County Schools is a great place to work. That should be our goal.

As people become more involved in the details of curriculum and material choices in schools, how would you handle competing issues and views (e.g. requests to remove certain books from libraries or lessons from classrooms)?

I believe most of these issues should be approached the same way: listen, gather facts, hear different perspectives, and make decisions that serve the broader educational mission of our schools. For example, our current book challenge process allows parents to make choices for their own children while ensuring one household does not make decisions for every other family. I generally support that approach. Many of these debates are rooted in distrust, misunderstanding, or a lack of communication. I am not afraid to have difficult conversations or hear viewpoints different from my own. However, I will not be drawn into ideological battles that distract from our primary responsibility: educating students and preparing them for success.

What avenues does the district provide for students to express their views on social and political issues? What specific disciplinary actions do you support?

Students have opportunities to express their views through classroom discussions and student-led clubs. Schools should help students learn how to engage respectfully with people who hold different perspectives. Empathy and interpersonal communication skills are essential when discussing social and political issues. I believe discipline should be based on behavior, not viewpoints. Students should not be disciplined for expressing an opinion. However, if expression becomes disruptive, harassing, or interferes with others' right to learn, appropriate consequences may be necessary. My goal is to create schools where students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives while maintaining a safe and productive learning environment.

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

As the father of two Pinellas County Schools students, the son of a public school teacher, and a lifelong Pinellas County resident, I bring both personal and professional experience to this role. For more than 15 years, I have worked with youth and families, led state-funded programs, and built community partnerships that help young people succeed. I am not a politician. I

am a dad who is deeply invested in the future of our schools. In short, I am the only candidate in this race with two children who will attend our schools for the next 15 years and more than 15 years of experience serving youth and families. That combination provides a perspective grounded in both professional experience and personal investment in Pinellas County.



Dawn Peters

Party: Non Partisan

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Campaign Phone: 7274100646

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Education: AA Degree in Geography. Certification as a preschool substitute. Personal Training Certification. Sports Nutritionist certification.

Professional Experience: Beginning in 2009, I served as a preschool substitute, I held PTA roles up to president. Certified Mentor. Employed at Thurgood Marshall FMS as Volunteer/Mentor Coordinator.

Public Service: Elected to the Pinellas County School Board in 2022

Facebook: www.facebook.com/dawnforpcs/

How do you compare the results of charter schools, private schools and public schools in the county? How will you ensure that public schools remain viable with adequate funding in this age of vouchers?

Charter, private, and public schools in Pinellas County show varied results; performance depends more on individual schools than on school type. Public schools serve all students, including those with the greatest needs, while private schools receiving vouchers are not required by FLDOE to meet the same accountability, admissions, or reporting standards. To keep public schools viable, we must ensure stable, predictable funding, protect resources tied to student needs, and require transparency for any school using public dollars. Strong public schools depend on sustained investment

What are your top 3 priorities for the district and what specific action will you take to address each of them?

-Continue to support students in the current trajectory of achieving increased academic growth. -Maintain stability in our district during a time of political and financial uncertainty at the state and federal levels. -Increase teacher and staff pay and support, not only through our district budget but also through advocacy at the state level.

Teachers and other staffing shortages are a pervasive problem. What suggestions do you have for improving recruitment and retention of staff?

There is currently no teacher shortage in Pinellas County; however, the district is focused on increasing teacher and staff pay to remain competitive and retain high-quality educators. To support this goal, administrative departments are being streamlined to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Schools are also being evaluated for potential consolidation, with an emphasis on cost-effective K-8 models where appropriate. Community meetings this summer are gathering stakeholder input before decisions are made, ensuring transparency. These efforts aim to expand access, maximize resources, and prioritize directing funds toward

As people become more involved in the details of curriculum and material choices in schools, how would you handle competing issues and views (e.g. requests to remove certain books from libraries or lessons from classrooms)?

Pinellas County Schools selects and implements curriculum in alignment with Florida State Standards and Statute 1003.42, covering required topics such as U.S. history, civics, and health. The district uses CPALMS to guide standards-based instruction. Curriculum adoption follows PCS Policy 2510, with annual updates in one major subject and opportunities for public input. Policy 2520 ensures transparency by allowing parents to review course materials. Implementation is supported by the Teaching and Learning Services division, which provides resources, training, and approved field trips updated annually. This process has been in place for several years and continues to work well.

What avenues does the district provide for students to express their views on social and political issues? What specific disciplinary actions do you support?

Pinellas County Schools supports student voice through a student government council known as Student Rights and Responsibilities. This council serves as a vital link between students and district leadership. Members meet monthly with the School Board, Superintendent, and key administrators to ensure consistent communication. These meetings provide students with the opportunity to share perspectives, contribute ideas, and collaborate on the development and implementation of initiatives and programs that positively impact schools across the district. The district also supports student-led clubs at all Middle and High Schools

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I bring a unique perspective as both a former parent, employee, and current Board Member, with deep engagement in Pinellas County Schools since 2009. My experience, strong relationships, and commitment to public education allow me to continue leadership with insight and confidence. I am prepared to strengthen partnerships, advocate effectively, and make thoughtful decisions, especially in a time of uncertainty. I want to serve all stakeholders for one final term.

Belleair Beach Council member

The City of Belleair Beach has a council-manager form of government. The city council is composed of seven members (the mayor and six council members) who are elected at large by the electors of the city. The council is responsible for adopting ordinances and resolutions, approving the city budget, and appointing the city manager, city clerk, city treasurer and city attorney. The city manager is the chief executive officer of the city, with the authority to execute all contracts, deeds and other documents approved by the council. To be eligible to hold the office, council members must be permanent residents and registered voters in Belleair Beach.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$3,000/year

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Kent Goff

Party: Non Partisan

Professional Experience: Architect

Public Service: Current Belleair Beach Council member 2026

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

- candidate declined to respond -

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

- candidate declined to respond -

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).

What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

- candidate declined to respond -

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

- candidate declined to respond -

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -



Annette Hopper

Party: Non Partisan

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Campaign Mailing Address: 115 8th Street Belleair Beach FL 33786

Education: Bachelor's degree in Accounting and Business/Management

Professional Experience: 30+ years in Finance and Investment Management serving UHNW Families and the RIA's that serve them

Public Service: Belleair Beach Alliance

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I bring more than 30 years of executive leadership experience in finance, operations, compliance and governance. My career has required me to manage budgets, evaluate major expenditures, solve complex problems and make decisions with long-term consequences. As a Belleair Beach resident and Beach Alliance member, I am also actively involved in protecting our beach access and property rights. I live here, work here and care deeply about our community. I will bring financial discipline, independent thinking, transparency and accountability to City Council.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

My top priorities are protecting beach access and residents' rights, and ensuring responsible use of taxpayer dollars. I will advocate for continued engagement on beach access issues and bring financial discipline and transparency to City spending. Council members are elected to represent Belleair Beach residents. That requires an independent voice, thoughtful debate and a willingness to ask before decisions are made. I will evaluate each issue on its merits, listen to residents and make decisions based on what is best for our community, not a group or personal vanity agenda.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).

What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

If Amendment 3 passes, the first step is understanding its actual impact on Belleair Beach revenues before deciding what, if anything, should be cut. I would prioritize essential services and public safety while conducting a disciplined review of spending, capital projects, contracts and other opportunities for efficiencies. With my financial and operational background, I believe you look for savings before reducing services or seeking new revenue. Residents deserve transparency about the financial impact, the options available and the tradeoffs involved before Council makes those decisions.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Affordable and workforce housing is a regional challenge that requires cooperation beyond Belleair Beach. As a small, largely built-out community, our options are limited, but we should be part of the solution. I would support working with Pinellas County and neighboring municipalities to identify practical housing opportunities, remove unnecessary barriers where appropriate, and support programs that help working families and first-time homeowners. Any local policy should balance housing needs with infrastructure, fiscal responsibility, property rights and preserving the character of Belleair Beach.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

After Helene and Milton, residents trying to rebuild faced a permitting and FEMA process filled with delays, fine print and red tape at the very time they needed government to work best. We need faster permitting, clear and consistent guidance on the FEMA 49/50% rule, and dedicated assistance to help homeowners navigate recovery. Belleair Beach should also advocate aggressively at the county and state levels for FEMA process improvements and meaningful insurance reform. Homeowners already dealing with devastating losses should not have to fight bureaucracy, escalating insurance costs and confusing regulations just to rebuild their homes.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

I believe decisions are best made closest to the people they affect. State government has an important role, but Florida's diverse communities face very different challenges, and a one-size-fits-all approach does not always serve residents well. Belleair Beach should have meaningful authority to address local issues based on our community's needs and priorities. I support a stronger balance that preserves home rule, while recognizing appropriate state oversight. Local elected officials are accountable to their residents and should have the ability and responsibility to represent them.



Lloyd Roberts

Party: Non Partisan

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Campaign Mailing Address: 102 20th Street Belleair Beach FL 33786

Education: Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering, Auburn University, 1977

Professional Experience: Twenty plus years with the Southwest Florida Water Management District as General Services Director and Director of Emergency Management. Also Public Works Director for the City of Brooksville.

Public Service: Four plus years with the City of Belleair Beach as a Council Member, more recently our City's Vice Mayor

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I'm currently retired and previously worked 20+ years for the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) as their General Services Director and Emergency Management Director. Prior to that, I was the Public Works Director for the City of Brooksville, FL. The experience I gained working with the above organizations can be utilized by our city in areas of stormwater and flood prevention, traffic flow optimization, and road surface improvements. Additionally, I have been serving our City of Belleair Beach as a Council Member for the past 4+ years. On 12/2/2024 I was elected by our City Council to serve as the Vice-Mayor for Belleair Beach, and I am still honored to hold that seat.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

1. Establishing a strong and trusting relationship with our neighboring Town of Belleair Shore. 2. Preparing for the potential reduction of revenue for our City that's associated with Amendment 3. Challenge No. 1 First of all, I want everyone who is reading this to understand that I am in no way saying that our City should just roll over to any and all demands of Belleair Shore. However, I have the demeanor, skills, and ability to sit down with their leaders to discuss the issues and challenges. And I truly believe both our City and their Town can and will come to a resolution that benefits both parties. It's unacceptable where we stand today! Challenge No. 2 Identify additional revenue sources available to our City. See next question.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).

What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

I don't believe our City will have to reduce or cut any of the services we are currently providing. Like any budget, you have expenses and revenues. We're fortunate that we have a few revenue streams that can be increased, that will basically have zero impact on our citizens. As an example, we can increase the rental rates for using our community center. Our building is used often as a wedding venue that really provides for a beautiful setting. By the way, this building is now paid off! Additionally, we have the opportunity to increase parking fees at a few locations around our City. Some of those are Morgan

Park, City Hall, and our Marina. Keep in mind that Belleair Beach Citizens that have a parking decal do not pay for parking.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Our City's Comprehensive Plan addresses low income housing in our Housing Element. We recognize that our City has limited availability to provide affordable housing within our corporate limit. Therefore, our City will maintain coordination with Pinellas County through continued participation in their Housing Authority or other agencies charged with the responsibility of providing affordable housing. Our City will actively participate in County sponsored housing programs which provides opportunities for affordable housing on a countywide basis. Through coordination with Pinellas County, our City will support and provide sites, if practical, for low income housing consistent with the residential character and density of Belleair Beach.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Our City website now explains the storm permitting process in accordance with SB 180, which gives our citizens clearer guidance to submit permit applications. We purchased the Forerunner software application which uses the County's established Hurricane Helene methodology to estimate damage, process inspection data more efficiently, and support contracted inspectors. We worked with the County to provide an interlocal agreement that allows our City to use a pre-bid RFP for disaster services. Now we can contract inspectors directly without requesting support from FDEM. Complete applications will now be reviewed and approved faster. We reduced our City's 'look back' period to 1 year, which should reduce difficulties with FEMA's 50% rule.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

More than 50 years ago, Florida voters added Home Rule powers to the Florida Constitution. This was a BIG DEAL and allows cities like Belleair Beach to adopt local laws as long as the laws do not conflict with state or federal law. If we want to add a traffic sign or build a holding pond to prevent flooding, we don't need to ask the state legislature for permission. We will always need to defend our home rule power, as the state continues to file bills aiming to reduce the rights of local decision making. We can't allow that. Two areas we should continue to focus on to protect home rule are: 1. Establish and build relationships with our legislators. 2. Work closely with the FL League of Cities, who advocate local decision-making.



Jody Shirley

Party: Non Partisan

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Campaign Phone: 7276445981

Campaign Mailing Address: 207 Harrison Avenue Belleair Beach FL 33786

Education: BA from Eckerd College, Major Business and Health Care Admin/Licensed Florida Contractor and Real Estate Broker

Professional Experience: Extensive background in commercial real estate development, construction, sales and leasing

Public Service: Belleair Beach City Council Member, Board Chair for Shepherd's Village, Board Member of New Life Solutions, Committee Member of Salvation Army, Member of Indian Rocks Church

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I have been a resident of the City of Belleair Beach for 26 1/2 years, giving me a deep understanding of our community, it's history and the way our city operates. My long-term commitment to Belleair Beach provides valuable historical perspective as we make important decision about the city's future. I bring extensive experience in commercial development and Real Estate. This background given me a strong understanding of property values, development and the importance of responsible planning. I believe this experience will help me protect and enhance property values while we continue to address the challenges of funding, maintaining and repairing our aging infrastructure, while being financial responsible to our stake holders.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

One of my top priorities is protecting Belleair Beach's existing beach access agreements with the Town of Belleair Shores and ensuring the ECL agreement remains in place. These agreements are important to preserving access and protecting the interest of our residents. I will work with necessary parties to ensure that the agreements are maintained, through all legal measures that are available to our city. Another ongoing focus is to continue to maintain and improve the city's aging infrastructure. I will continue to look at long-term planning to have funding in place for repairing and replace the cities infrastructure.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).

What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

I support property tax relief for our residence, the city of Belleair Beach will not experience a significant impact in Amendment 3 passes. But as a precaution I would take a strong look at our budget, revenue sources, and expenses and adjust as needed. There are always opportunities for improvement and I'm sure we can trim when needed.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

This is not an issue for the City of Belleair Beach, which is why I service in several areas in the community to assist with affordable housing for working families.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

I will support the continued investment in stormwater, drainage, roads, utilities and other critical infrastructure while identifying opportunities to strengthen our community in preparation of storm season. Supporting the City's emergency response plan, making sure we have adequate staffing, equipment, communication and agreements with neighboring communities and outside agencies to respond quickly after a storm. Residence who suffered major damage should not have to navigate a confusing or unnecessarily slow process to begin rebuilding their homes. I would support establishing a streamlined post-storm permitting process, identify staff responsible for storm damage permits, publish timelines and tracking information.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

I believe local government should have the ability to make decisions about local issues that directly affect their communities. Florida's constitution and statutes provide municipalities with authority, but the state is increasingly trying to limit our authority. The state does not understand our local issues, what makes sense for a large inland city does not make sense for a small beach community like Belleair Beach. Decision involving local land use, infrastructure, stormwater, beach access, development and community character often is best made by the people who live in and understand the community. While I respect our state representatives, I am a strong supporter of home rule and would like to keep all decision making local.

Clearwater Council Seat 5

The City of Clearwater is governed by a Council/Manager form of government with the City Council serving as the governing body. The City Council is comprised of the Mayor and four Councilmembers, who each serve four-year terms. The City Council is the legislative and policy-making body of the City, responsible for approving the budget and determining the ad valorem tax rate on all real and personal property within the corporate limits of the City. Councilmembers also evaluate the job performance of the City Manager and the City Attorney, attend City Council meetings, special workshops/meetings, and schedule and attend community meetings to address various topics and initiatives.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$45,000/year Click here to view the June 1st, 2026 candidate forum: 2026 CNC Clearwater Council Candidate Forum

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Mark Bunker

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Campaign Mailing Address: 1200 S. Missouri Ave. Suite 113 Clearwater FL 33756

Education: BS in Radio/TV/Film, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

Professional Experience: I've worked in front of and behind the cameras for most of my career, starting the morning guy at a mid-west radio station where I also wrote and produced ads for station sponsors and outside ad agencies. I moved to L.A. and worked at Universal, Paramount, and CBS before moving to San Diego to work in TV News.

Public Service: I served on the Clearwater City Council from 2020-2024, I sat on the city's Pension Board during those years as well as the Downtown Development Board.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MarkBunker2026/

Twitter: [x.com/markbunker2026](https://twitter.com/markbunker2026)

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

I would first protect public safety and essential infrastructure. I would not start by cutting police, fire, emergency response, stormwater protection, or road maintenance. Those are core responsibilities. We should look at delaying lower-priority capital projects, reduce outside consulting fees, pursue state and federal grants aggressively and look for shared-service opportunities with the county and neighboring cities. We need to continue growing the tax base through responsible redevelopment, affordable housing and small business growth. I would not pretend we can keep every service exactly the same. I support real tax relief, but it has to be done responsibly, avoiding panic cuts, keeping residents informed at every step.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Affordable and workforce housing must remain a top priority. During my time on council, I supported affordable housing projects that moved forward even as costs rose during COVID, and I backed changes allowing ADUs so families have more flexible options. I would continue expanding partnerships with nonprofits, responsible developers, faith groups, and

county/state programs to build more rental and ownership opportunities. We should use city-owned land where appropriate, reduce unnecessary barriers, support ADUs and missing-middle housing, and look at creative models like tiny-home communities and first-time homebuyer assistance. People who work in Clearwater should be able to live in Clearwater.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Helene and Milton showed that storm recovery must be faster, clearer, and more coordinated. I would strengthen stormwater and drainage projects, harden critical infrastructure, improve debris removal planning, and make sure residents get timely, accurate updates before and after storms. For recovery, the city should create a one-stop storm permitting team, expand temporary staffing after disasters, publish clear checklists, and assign case managers for residents dealing with the FEMA 49/50% rule so they are not bounced from office to office. We should also push FEMA and the state for clearer guidance and more flexibility, while helping homeowners rebuild safely, legally, and as quickly as possible.

A number of downtown properties remain vacant, resulting in a quiet downtown. What can be done to spur downtown development?

As someone who has been standing up to Scientology for close to 30 years, I urged the city to make sure Scientology came through with their end of any bargain before the city gave them a reward. After years of leaving buildings vacant, Scientology is now promising to give the city a vibrant, thriving downtown. I hope they come through. If they do, the next concern must be Scientology's control of the businesses they allow to operate downtown. They are hand-picking what businesses will operate in their properties. David Miscavige micromanages every aspect of Scientology and is ruthless as a leader. Scientology has long put pressure on businesses downtown. The question now is, "will this Clearwater's downtown or Scientology's?"

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

I support exploring a public utility because residents deserve lower, more stable electric bills and more local accountability. Clearwater's franchise agreement with Duke is ending, and the city's study found this could potentially reduce bills, but this is a major decision involving hundreds of millions of dollars, legal risk, and long-term responsibility. I would not support a blank check or a rushed breakup. I would support a transparent, independent review with St. Petersburg and regional partners to determine the real cost, savings, reliability, storm resilience, and clean-energy options. If public power can save residents money and improve service, we should pursue it. If the numbers do not work, we should not.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing Clearwater in the next 5 years. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

Clearwater's top two challenges are affordability and resilience. Too many working families, seniors, and young people are being priced out. I would expand affordable and workforce housing through nonprofit partnerships, responsible redevelopment, ADUs, use of city-owned land where appropriate, and support for small businesses that create good local jobs. Storms, flooding, infrastructure needs, and rising costs are putting more pressure on residents and city services. I would prioritize stormwater and drainage projects, harden critical infrastructure, improve disaster permitting and recovery, and review every major expense to protect core services like police, fire, roads, parks, and libraries while keeping taxes and fees fair.



Sam Wilson

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Education: Bachelors Degree

Professional Experience: Congressional Staffer

Public Service: Clearwater Housing Authority

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Instagram: www.instagram.com/votesamwilson/

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

Lower property taxes have been at the center of my campaign because too many families, seniors, veterans, and first-time buyers are being squeezed. I welcome real relief, but it must be done responsibly. For too long, the city has refused to roll back the rate. The answer is to make government live within its means, not to gut services. That means no pay raises for politicians, no \$90 million buildings, and a top-to-bottom audit for waste before anything residents rely on is touched. Police, fire, water, roads, and storm readiness come first. We make up revenue by growing our tax base through a revitalized downtown and private investment, not by quietly raising other taxes. Manage money like families do, and we can do both.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Housing affordability comes down to supply. I serve on the Clearwater Housing Authority and see it up close: when we do not build enough, prices climb, and our teachers, first responders, and service workers get pushed out of the city where they work. My approach is to make it easier to build by cutting red tape and updating outdated zoning along corridors like US-19, while partnering with private builders and employers instead of micromanaging the market. But growth must pay for itself, so I will insist developers cover their own roads, pipes, and schools rather than handing the bill to taxpayers. More supply stabilizes rents, and lower property taxes plus first-time buyer support help young families & seniors put down roots and stay here.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Clearwater must prepare before storms hit, not scramble afterward. I will invest in storm-hardening our critical infrastructure, pair it with nature-based defenses like living shorelines and dunes, make sure every city worker knows their role, and coordinate closely with state emergency management. I will use my experience in a congressional office to fight for beach renourishment and the federal dollars behind it. On recovery, permitting cannot be what stops a family from rebuilding, so I will set guaranteed review timelines, fast-track storm rebuilds, and add surge staffing. The FEMA 50% rule is crushing families, so I will push for fair appraisals, clear guidance, and common-sense reform to get people home faster.

A number of downtown properties remain vacant, resulting in a quiet downtown. What can be done to spur downtown development?

Downtown Clearwater is not for sale. My focus is revitalization and more open-for-business signs. Rather than chase giveaways or backroom deals, I will help activate the vacant properties we already have and recruit the small businesses that bring downtown back to life, with the city and elected officials leading the conversation. It is already working along Cleveland Street, where historic buildings have been refurbished, and private investment is returning, and projects like The Bluffs are adding energy to the waterfront. I will build on that by updating zoning, offering targeted redevelopment incentives, cutting permitting red tape, and putting county-owned buildings to good use, all in the Sunshine.

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

Residents are right to be frustrated. Energy prices are among the highest in the state and keep climbing, which hurts affordability. We also should not let massive data centers strain our grid and push everyone's costs even higher. I am glad the city studied its options, but I am cautious about a government takeover. Why expect government, with no expertise running a power company, to do it cheaper than businesses that do this for a living? Buying the system could cost at least \$572 million, with estimates above a billion, plus the risk of owning storm restoration. I will demand independent verification, protect taxpayers from a billion-dollar gamble, and meanwhile press hard for lower, fairer rates and better reliability.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing Clearwater in the next 5 years. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

The two challenges I hear about most are affordability and resilience, and they are why I am running. On affordability, I will roll back the millage rate, bring real spending discipline to City Hall with no politician pay raises and no \$90 million buildings, and expand housing supply while making developers pay for their own infrastructure. On resilience, I will storm-harden critical infrastructure, use nature-based defenses for our beach and neighborhoods, coordinate with emergency management, train every city employee, and fix permitting so families can rebuild fast. I will also push to reform the FEMA 50% rule, restore our pier, and keep renourishing our beaches. Affordable and resilient: that is the goal.

Dunedin City Commissioner Seat 4

The City of Dunedin operates under a Commission-Manager form of government that combines the political leadership of elected officials in the form of a City Commission with the managerial experience of an appointed local government manager. Four Commissioners and a Mayor are elected by the registered voters of Dunedin under a staggered system that ensures that the city will have a degree of experience serving on the Commission at all times. The City Commission is empowered to create ordinances, set municipal fees, enter into contracts and issue bonds to finance public projects. In addition, the City Commission is responsible for the approval of an annual budget and for appointing citizen members to 9 volunteer Boards/Committees that help advise the city. The Chief Executive Officer, currently the City Manager oversees all eight City departments and the annual budget.

Term: 4 Years **Salary:** \$15,600/year

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Commissioner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Janice C. Bennett

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: Master of Engineering UF 2010, Graduate Certificate in Environmental Policy & Management UF 2009, BS Civil Engineering USF 1987

Professional Experience: Florida Licensed Professional Engineer since 1992
Public Service: 25+ years of Public Service to local governments in Pinellas County
Facebook: www.facebook.com/nan4dunedin/
Instagram: www.instagram.com/Nan4Dunedin

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

My career managing local utilities and public works gives me practical "nuts and bolts" understanding of how Dunedin works. Living in Dunedin since 1998 has given me a deep appreciation of the people, neighborhoods, businesses and history that make Dunedin such a unique and enviable community. I understand the importance of balancing community priorities with responsible budgets, effective operations and sustainable resources for future challenges. I am prepared to listen to residents, work collaboratively to solve problems and help craft policies that preserve Dunedin's livability. My combination of professional experience, local knowledge and commitment to public service make me the natural choice for Dunedin Commission Seat 4.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

Affordability & Property Tax Reduction- Food, housing and insurance are straining citizens' ability to pay for everything, including city services. Property taxes have been a primary funding source for local essential services. I will balance any necessary funding reductions by prioritizing efficient delivery of core services to protect funding for as many other community enhancing services, events & programs as possible. **Weather Vulnerabilities-** Safeguarding the well-being of our community is city's the most important function. Implementing the 2026 Vulnerability Assessment recommendations to protect against extreme rainfall, sea level rise and surge is priority; especially development code and stormwater standards review & updates.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).

What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

First Dunedin should rank all city services ranging from essential to desirable to fund in order of priority to the community. Cost efficiency, accurate estimates and reserves sufficient for unforeseen events are essential to developing a fiscally responsible budget. Additional revenue sources should be explored such as grants and new or increased user fees. Examples include state appropriations, the Fire Assessment currently under consideration and full cost recovery fees for recreational programs. It may be possible to delay some capital or maintenance projects. And finally, lower ranking albeit desirable services, events, programs and projects may need to be canceled. Regardless, the city must produce a balanced budget every year.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

A smaller city like Dunedin has limited financial resources to tackle this societal need. However, partnering with non-profits such as Habitat for Humanity or larger government programs like Pinellas County Housing Authority can leverage the resources available. Also the Dunedin Land Development Code (LDC) can be amended to incentivize workforce housing or to integrate affordable housing into other developments. Additionally, many lots in Dunedin are large enough to accommodate additional dwelling units (ADUs) and responsibly manage stormwater considerations. As discussed above, the LDC will need to be amended to address stormwater management standards for resiliency. Workforce housing incentives and ADUs could also be addressed.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

A Vulnerability Assessment was completed in June 2026. It quantifies Dunedin's risk & provides recommendations to amend the LDC and stormwater management standards. This needs to be completed as soon as possible. The FEMA rule is mandatory for all communities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program and protects against repetitive damage to a property. Education prior to storms will help property owners understand the value of modifying to current standards to protect their investment. Post storm, residents are desperate to fix their homes as soon as possible. Waiving building fees for storm repair relieves one small burden. Dedicating staff to focus on storm repairs would streamline the process and may be reimbursed by FEMA.



Mark A. Ossian

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Education: B.A. University Of South Florida; J.D. University Of Florida College Of Law

Professional Experience: Attorney, CPA, Over 40 years in private practice.

Public Service: General Counsel The Refuge Of Clearwater (Homeless outreach Church), Dunedin Rotary Club

Instagram: www.instagram.com/p/DbRYQWEHDP/

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I was born and grew up in Dunedin, graduated from Dunedin Highschool, and I am very proud to say that Dunedin is my hometown. I am both a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and an Attorney. I have 40 years' experience in professional practice representing clients in many different areas including business organizations, negotiating contracts, civil litigation, real property disputes, and all facets of marital and family law. With my many years of experience I am well versed in managing conflict and reaching creative solutions to difficult circumstances. I have the temperament, intelligence and demeanor to effectively represent my fellow residents of Dunedin. It would be my honor and privilege to serve the residents of my hometown.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

1. Completing the repairs to the marina and dock. I have heard from many residents who are frustrated and upset with the amount of time it is taking to complete the marina and dock repairs. I would address the causes of the continued delay and immediately take action to remedy these issues, so that the marina and dock are repaired in an expedited time frame, without any further delays. 2. Controlling growth while maintaining a charming downtown. I would be focused on managing smart growth in the downtown corridor, while keeping the charming and small-town atmosphere. This can be done by managing the architectural elements and design of new development, while working collaboratively with our small business owners and developers.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).**What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?**

First of all, I would not support the cutting of any essential services including infrastructure and public safety. These essential services are the most critical to our residents. In a big picture sense, I would look to support cutting the least utilized non-essential services first and reduce expenditures pro-rata across all non-essential services.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Affordable housing is a very difficult and problematic issue in Dunedin. Single family home values have skyrocketed in Dunedin in recent years. Homes that were once affordable are now selling for over \$500,000 and more. Dunedin also has limited undeveloped land for new housing construction. This issue can only be solved by the city and developers working together to find creative and workable solutions. As a commissioner, I will be open and receptive to all ideas to create additional affordable housing.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

The damages caused by Helene and Milton were devastating, especially to those residents on and near the coast, who experienced flood damage. Our local governments need to be flexible and have a sense of urgency to assist residents and to work in tandem with FEMA using a common sense and practical approach to allow the residents to re-build and recover. The permitting process should be simplified and fast tracked during times of emergency.

East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District Seat 2

The East Lake Tarpon Special Fire Control District is one of four Special Fire Control Districts that provide fire rescue, safety, and Advanced Life Support services (ALS) to unincorporated areas of Pinellas County. Each district is also part of the integrated Pinellas County EMS system. This means that each District is required to respond if they are the closest unit to an emergency incident, even if the incident occurs outside of their District's borders. Each District is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners elected by the registered voters within the District. The Commissioners provide guidance in establishing and managing community programs such as CPR instruction, certified child safety seat installation, home safety inspections, and fire safety programs with local schools. The Board of Commissioners is also responsible for managing the budget and financial resources of the Fire Control District.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$500/month



Jim Downes

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Email: Jimdowneseastlakefire@gmail.com

Campaign Mailing Address: 5730 Stag Thicket Ln Palm Harbor FL 34685

Education: Graduate of FSU Business College

Professional Experience: Owner of Industrial Construction Company

Public Service: East Lake Fire Commissioner

What in your professional and personal experience distinguishes you from your opponents and makes you the best candidate for this position?

My life in Florida FSU Grad. 23 Years at Honeywell, 16 Years Owner of an Industrial Construction Co, 4 Years Commissioner @ East Lake Fire District. I've grown up in Pinellas. Raised my family, worked, owned my company and served as

Commissioner for 70 years in Pinellas.

Explain the top two issues and/or unique challenges facing this fire control district? If elected, what actions would you propose to address these issues or challenges (including potential budget cuts from the Property Tax Exemption Amendment)?

1) Future Tax revenue a corresponding cuts is a major issue today. Our team is reviewing postponing capital expenditures, hiring freeze, and reapportionment of staff duties. 2) East Lake Firefighters provide support to several adjacent communities. With cut backs in personnel a potential we must develop a plan to maintain the safety of our citizens.

Extreme weather and sea level rise are increasing the need for disaster response services while at the same time adding to the risks first responders face. What will be your approach to addressing these challenges?

Over the past few years storm and forest fires have been a growing concern. In preparation we have acquired a special purpose vehicle allowing the firefighters to navigate flooding and traverse the Brokercreek preserve. In addition we train with forest dept and the Pinellas disaster services.

Is the fire control district adequately prepared, trained, and supplied with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other necessary resources to manage health crises and other similar situations? If not, what is needed?

East Lake Fire District are overachievers in keeping our Firefighters safe and protected. We replace equipment and bunker gear (fire fighting gear) several year before the life term. We stay appraise of the latest manufacturing improvements and introduce the enhancements as quickly as possible.

Do you feel that residents within the fire district understand the district's role and function in the community? If not, what would you do to help educate them?

I believe our citizens are well appraised of our services and role. I believe they are generally pleased in our quality of service. But are also concern with the growing cost. With the impact of changes coming to the taxing structure this review of responsibilities and postponement of capital purchases will aid in cost reductions. Also, public education has been a key task in keeping our community aware of the growing cost of these services.



Bob Fornwalt

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Email: RCF000@VERIZON.NET

Campaign Phone: 7274329033

Campaign Mailing Address: 830 Eastlake Road S. Tarpon Springs FL 34688

Education: Some college

Professional Experience: Underground fire licenes

What in your professional and personal experience distinguishes you from your opponents and makes you the best candidate for this position?

- candidate declined to respond -

Explain the top two issues and/or unique challenges facing this fire control district? If elected, what actions would you propose to address these issues or challenges (including potential budget cuts from the Property Tax Exemption Amendment)?

- candidate declined to respond -

Extreme weather and sea level rise are increasing the need for disaster response services while at the same time adding to the risks first responders face. What will be your approach to addressing these challenges?

- candidate declined to respond -

Is the fire control district adequately prepared, trained, and supplied with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other necessary resources to manage health crises and other similar situations? If not, what is needed?

- candidate declined to respond -

Do you feel that residents within the fire district understand the district's role and function in the community? If not, what would you do to help educate them?

- candidate declined to respond -

Largo Commissioner Seat 2

The City Council consists of the mayor and six council members elected at large by all qualified electors of the City. The City Commission is empowered to create ordinances, set municipal fees, enter into contracts and issue bonds to finance public projects. In addition, the City Commission is responsible for the approval of an annual budget and for appointing citizen members to the various volunteer Boards/Committees that help advise the city. The Chief Executive Officer, currently the City Manager oversees all City departments and the annual budget.

Term: 4 Years **Salary:** \$19,334.64/year

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Commissioner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Matthew Faustini

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Website: www.mattfaustini.com/

Campaign Email: matt@mattfaustini.com

Campaign Phone: 727-282-3065

Campaign Mailing Address: 1015 Lake Palms Drive Largo FL 33771

Education: Osceola High School, BA in Political Science USFSP

Professional Experience: Mid Level Management, Project and Data Management

Public Service: Chair of the Largo Planning Board

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mattforlargo/

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

As a lifelong area resident and Chair of the Largo Planning Board, I understand our city's unique challenges. I hold a B.A. in Political Science from USF St. Petersburg and bring extensive private-sector experience as an IT and Project Manager, alongside previous project management and customer service leadership at Tampa Electric. This background gives me the analytical tools to dissect municipal budgets, scrutinize capital expenditures, and optimize utility rates. Meanwhile, my hands-on civic experience on the Planning Board ensures I understand Largo's development codes, land use maps, and the real-world impact of transit and housing policies on our neighborhoods. I rely on data, not politics, to make sound decisions for Largo.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

Largo's top challenges are sustainable growth and maintaining fiscal responsibility while upgrading infrastructure. First, as we grow, we must balance development with preserving our neighborhoods. I propose reforming our land use and development codes to encourage smart, transit-oriented development while enacting sensible regulations on short-term rentals to protect housing supply. Second, aging infrastructure is driving up utility costs. I will rigorously scrutinize capital expenditures and municipal rate structures to ensure residents aren't overcharged, demanding data-driven transparency for every tax dollar spent. For detailed policy proposals and more about my campaign, please visit <https://www.mattfaustini.com/>.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).

What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

If Amendment 3 passes, Largo can adapt without cutting essential services. Instead of reactive cuts, I will execute a proactive fiscal blueprint. First, I will implement zero-based budgeting with a strict 1.5% operating growth cap. Second, I will put a referendum before voters to transition law enforcement to the Pinellas County Sheriff. This saves \$5 million annually, offsetting revenue losses while creating the fiscal space to fund universal VPK. Third, I will enact a dedicated Fire Assessment to permanently insulate our Fire Department from state tax cuts. Finally, I will cap planned 15% utility rate hikes at 3%. Read the full strategy at <https://www.mattfaustini.com/proptaxes>.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Subsidies don't fix our root crisis. Pumping tax credits into an artificially constrained market just drives rents higher while outlawing the supply needed to house people. To expand affordable housing for renters and buyers, we must build. Oppressive regulations and permit delays make missing-middle starter homes mathematically impossible, leaving only massive Live Local projects out of our control. My plan cuts red tape to build 10,000 homes by 2036. I will allow duplexes and triplexes in all residential zones, remove costly parking minimums and minimum lot sizes, and adopt a form-based code to create walkable, abundant neighborhoods. Read my full plan at <https://www.mattfaustini.com/housing>.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Helene and Milton exposed critical gaps in our recovery. To improve resilience, I will push Largo to achieve a FEMA CRS Class 2 Rating to lower flood insurance and fund a dedicated Floodplain Manager. To help residents rebuild faster, we must fix how we handle the FEMA 50% rule. Largo must shift to proactive damage inspections instead of waiting for permit applications. I will implement GIS tracking to streamline Substantial Damage assessments and use a consistent formula to calculate repair costs. I will also create dedicated service centers to help residents navigate FEMA compliance and waive storm permit fees. Read my plans at <https://www.mattfaustini.com/storm> and <https://www.mattfaustini.com/rates>.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

We are witnessing a fundamental rupture in Florida the end of local control. Tallahassee is continuously stripping power from municipalities, dismantling our constitutional Home Rule without constraint. Every legislative session proves the balance of power is broken, Tallahassee does what it wants, and cities suffer what they must. Faced with this power grab, too many local leaders just go along to get along, hoping compliance buys safety. It won't. We can no longer rely on the state to protect us. Instead, we must take care of ourselves by adopting a proactive, data-driven fiscal framework that shields our local services from arbitrary state-level cuts. Read my full strategy to protect Largo at <https://www.mattfaustini.com/proptaxes>.



Curtis Holmes

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Website: www.curtisholmes.com/

Campaign Mailing Address: 1101 S Belcher Rd Suite H Largo FL 33771

Professional Experience: Licensed insurance agent from 1975 - 2020, owned First Southeast Insurance Services, Inc. until selling the company in 2020.

Public Service: Largo Commissioner since 2009

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

- candidate declined to respond -

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

- candidate declined to respond -

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3). What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

- candidate declined to respond -

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

- candidate declined to respond -

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -

Oldsmar Council Member Seat 3

The City of Oldsmar has a council-manager form of government. The city council is composed of five members (the mayor and four council members). The city council is the governing body of the city with powers to pass ordinances, adopt resolutions, approve the budget, appropriate funds, and appoint the city manager. The city council is responsible for the proper conduct of all municipal operations. The city manager is responsible for the administration of all city affairs and is accountable to the city council.

Term: 3 years **Salary:** \$10,000/year

View the June 8th Candidate Forum here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/BqZLvEX4ZEK?si=Sb5Mid3LT7PZk4vP>

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Amber Stephens

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Website: www.amberstephensforoldsmar.com

Campaign Email: amber4oldsmar@gmail.com

Campaign Phone: 7192313373

Campaign Mailing Address:

Education: University of Hawaii at Manoa (Bachelor's of Science), Arizona State University (Masters of Education)

Professional Experience: Background in Behavior Analysis and Speech Therapy

Public Service: Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, Planning Board Member, Woman's Club of Oldsmar, Former Oldsmar Friends of the Arts Board Director, Former Public Art Review & Selection Committee, Former Public Art Task Force, Janice Miller Citizens Academy Graduate, Pinellas Citizen University Graduate, Canvassing Board (2024 & 2025)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/people/Amber-Stephens-for-Oldsmar-City-Council-Seat-3/61585726441614/

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

Oldsmar is where I live, work, and play. My family has built our life here, and I've spent years serving this community. As a mother of 3 with a background in behavior analysis and speech therapy, I bring a problem-solving mindset rooted in listening and results. For 6 years, I attended meetings and workshops to understand our city government. I serve as Chair of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board and as a member of the Planning Board. I have also served on the Public Art Task Force, Review & Selection Committee, 2 Canvassing Boards, and completed the Janice Miller Citizens Academy & Pinellas County Citizen University. I will bring accountable leadership, fiscal discipline, and a commitment to keeping Oldsmar safe, strong, and thriving.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing Clearwater in the next 5 years. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

Two of Oldsmar's most pressing challenges over the next five years are potential property tax reform and aging infrastructure. If tax reform passes, local revenue could decline, requiring the city to do more with less. We must strengthen financial resiliency, prioritize core services, reduce inefficiencies, expand alternative revenue sources, and protect reserves. In addition, roads, stormwater systems, and utilities require continued investment through a data-driven capital improvement plan and pursuit of state and federal grants. I will work collaboratively with Council to set priorities and provide clear direction to the City Manager, aligning policy goals with staff expertise and implementation capacity.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Both hurricanes demonstrated that Oldsmar's response and coordination were strong and effective. I would not change the city's core response but would focus on maintaining year-round awareness to strengthen volunteer engagement. The Oldsmar Support Services Alliance was a successful model that should serve as a template for other communities. The city communicated effectively through the Oldsmar Strong website, implemented mobile permitting to help residents begin rebuilding, and held regular meetings so residents understood the recovery process. As a volunteer with Community United Methodist Church of Oldsmar and Operation Jack's Village, both Alliance partners, I support continued growth in volunteerism and community partnerships.

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November (Amendment 3). What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

Any reduction in property taxes would reduce local revenue and require the city to do more with less, potentially impacting core services such as public safety, parks and recreation, infrastructure, stormwater management, and long-term capital planning. The responsible approach is to plan ahead by strengthening financial resiliency, protecting reserves, prioritizing core services, eliminating inefficiencies, and expanding diversified revenue sources including grants, impact fees, and responsible growth. The city is conducting focus groups and resident surveys to ensure budget priorities reflect community values. These decisions should be made collectively by the council, grounded in data, community priorities, and accountability.

How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Florida's Live Local Act provides an important tool for expanding affordable and workforce housing. As a Planning Board member, I understand how local policy, land development regulations, and our Comprehensive Plan shape growth. I support responsible infill, mixed-use development, and workforce housing that fits Oldsmar's character while ensuring infrastructure keeps pace. I will evaluate every proposal on its merits, ask informed, and support projects that benefit our community while protecting local decision-making and maintaining fiscal responsibility. My experience has prepared me to balance growth with preserving the quality of life that makes Oldsmar a great place to live. I am ready to lead with my experience.



Fraser Young

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Website: fraser4oldsmar.com/

Campaign Email: fraser4oldsmar@gmail.com

Campaign Phone: 7275044213

Campaign Mailing Address: 307 Bay Arbor Blvd Oldsmar FL 34677

Education: Bachelor's Degrees in Economics and Finance

Professional Experience: Corporate risk manager; former bank auditor; 10 years in financial services

Facebook: www.facebook.com/oldsmarfraser/

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I am a corporate risk manager and former bank auditor with degrees in Economics and Finance and a decade in financial services. My profession is reading budgets and contracts, questioning assumptions, and catching bad deals before they become losses. That is the skill this council needs now. My wife and I chose Oldsmar to raise our two toddlers because of the safety, the city facilities, and the green space, and we plan to be here for decades. As a resident I have spoken at City Council against oversized development and pushed for open, accountable government. My campaign has taken no money from former mayors, from anyone tied to the current council, from the chamber of commerce, or from local businesses. I answer to residents alone.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing Clearwater in the next 5 years. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

I am a candidate in Oldsmar and will answer for Oldsmar. The top two challenges are fiscal pressure and development pressure. First, the property tax amendment on the November ballot could cut city revenue while costs keep rising. I will put an auditor's review on every budget line and contract, protect core services, and take on no new debt. Second, development. I am the only candidate in this race who opposes new apartment development. Oldsmar's character and infrastructure capacity come first. I will scrutinize every proposal before council, demand real public benefit, and vote no on projects our

roads and utilities cannot carry. Pedestrian-friendly improvements, local businesses, and quality retail are how downtown should grow.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Oldsmar sits at the top of Old Tampa Bay. Our exposure is not news, and Helene and Milton showed its cost. I am running for council, which sets policy and budgets, not operations. The policy I would set: prioritize projects by flood risk, fund stormwater and shoreline work through the Capital Improvement Plan rather than emergency spending, and harden the water and wastewater systems. On recovery, council should fund surge permitting capacity before storms, set service standards with published timelines, and require consistent, transparent substantial damage determinations under the FEMA 50 percent rule, with written guidance on options like independent appraisals where the code allows. Residents rebuilding should not fight City Hall too.

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November (Amendment 3). What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

The amendment raises the homestead exemption to \$150,000 in 2027 and \$250,000 in 2028 for non-school levies. Voters will decide it. Council's job is to be ready either way, and budgets under pressure are my training. If revenue falls, services get funded in the order residents depend on them: police, fire, water, and stormwater first. Savings come from everything else. Consultants, studies, subsidies, and memberships get a line-by-line audit. Through public records requests I have documented more than \$200,000 in City of Oldsmar payments to the Upper Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce since October 2020, a chamber that primarily serves Hillsborough communities. Review starts there, not with first responders. No new debt to paper over the gap.

How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

I will be honest instead of promising what a city of Oldsmar's size cannot deliver. Our real affordable housing is the stock we already have: mobile home and senior communities, older single-family homes, and modest condos. I will protect those neighborhoods from redevelopment pressure. I am skeptical of projects marketed as affordable under the state's Live Local Act, which lets developers bypass local zoning with rents priced up to 120 percent of area median income. Working families do not call that affordable. The levers a city controls are cost levers: hold the line on property taxes and fees, run efficient utilities, and streamline permitting so repairs and improvements cost less. Affordability is the test I apply to every vote.

Palm Harbor Special Fire Control & Rescue Dist Seat 2

The Palm Harbor Special Fire Control & Rescue District is one of four Special Fire Control Districts that provide fire rescue, safety, and Advanced Life Support services (ALS) to unincorporated areas of Pinellas County. Each District is also part of the integrated Pinellas County EMS system. This means that each District is required to respond if they are the closest unit to an emergency incident, even if the incident occurs outside of their District's borders. Each District is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners elected by the registered voters within the District. The Commissioners provide guidance in establishing and managing community programs such as CPR instruction, certified child safety seat installation, home safety inspections, and fire safety programs with local schools. The Board of Commissioners is also responsible for managing the budget and financial resources of the Fire Control District.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$500/month



Benjamin Nichols

Party: Non Partisan

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61590296922206

What in your professional and personal experience distinguishes you from your opponents and makes you the best candidate for this position?

- candidate declined to respond -

Explain the top two issues and/or unique challenges facing this fire control district? If elected, what actions would you propose to address these issues or challenges (including potential budget cuts from the Property Tax Exemption Amendment)?

- candidate declined to respond -

Extreme weather and sea level rise are increasing the need for disaster response services while at the same time adding to the risks first responders face. What will be your approach to addressing these challenges?

- candidate declined to respond -

Is the fire control district adequately prepared, trained, and supplied with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other necessary resources to manage health crises and other similar situations? If not, what is needed?

- candidate declined to respond -

Do you feel that residents within the fire district understand the district's role and function in the community? If not, what would you do to help educate them?

- candidate declined to respond -



Julie Peluso

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Website: www.juliepeluso.com/

Campaign Email: Vote@JuliePeluso.com

Campaign Phone: (727)804-1668

Campaign Mailing Address: 1538 Wicklow Drive Palm Harbor FL 34684

Education: St. Petersburg College

Professional Experience: Realtor - Broker Associate

Public Service: Palm Harbor Fire Commissioner, Seat 2, FASD District Official, Florida Sheriffs Youth Ranches Board, Pinellas Sp Fire Coalition

Facebook: www.facebook.com/julie.peluso.5

Instagram: instagram.com/pelusojulie

What in your professional and personal experience distinguishes you from your opponents and makes you the best candidate for this position?

I currently serve on the Fire Commission and have demonstrated effective, fiscally responsible leadership. I have chaired the Pinellas County Emergency Management Advisory Council (EMSAC) and represent our District on the Pinellas Coalition of Special Fire Districts. As a Certified District Official with the Florida Association of Special Districts, I advocate for our District with the Florida Legislature. I am a business owner and 40-year Palm Harbor resident. Learn more at JuliePeluso.com.

Explain the top two issues and/or unique challenges facing this fire control district? If elected, what actions would you propose to address these issues or challenges (including potential budget cuts from the Property Tax Exemption Amendment)?

The two greatest challenges facing our District are potential budget reductions from Property Tax Exemption Amendment 3, if it passes in November, and firefighter recruitment and retention. Our millage has been capped at 2 mills since 1996, yet sound fiscal stewardship has helped make our District a sought-after department for top personnel. If Amendment 3 reduces revenue, we must identify alternative funding sources while carefully controlling costs - recognizing that approximately 85% of our budget is personnel costs. We must remain competitive, maintain strong labor relations, and negotiate responsibly to recruit and retain the best firefighters.

Extreme weather and sea level rise are increasing the need for disaster response services while at the same time adding to the risks first responders face. What will be your approach to addressing these challenges?

Extreme weather and rising sea levels will continue to challenge our residents and first responders. Preparedness starts with early notification, clear communication, and timely implementation of evacuation protocols so residents, pets, and especially our most vulnerable citizens can evacuate safely. We must continue to maintain the equipment and training needed to respond safely to flooding and other emergencies, including utilizing our high-water vehicle for evacuations. We will also continue to support resilient construction and updated building codes in areas affected by flooding to reduce repeated damage and improve long-term community safety.

Is the fire control district adequately prepared, trained, and supplied with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other necessary resources to manage health crises and other similar situations? If not, what is needed?

One of my top priorities is ensuring our firefighters have the training, PPE, equipment, and resources needed to stay safe and respond effectively to health crises and other emergencies. Our District sets aside reserves specifically for PPE replacement, allowing us to keep protective gear current and replace it on a regular schedule. We will continue to evaluate new PPE and emerging technologies based on proven performance, testing, and safety benefits. Responsible budgeting, staff recommendations and proactive planning will ensure our firefighters have the tools they need when called upon to protect our community.

Do you feel that residents within the fire district understand the district's role and function in the community? If not, what would you do to help educate them?

Education is key to safety and understanding the many services the Palm Harbor Fire District provides. Our full-time PIO helps educate residents through classes, community events, training, school programs, and social media. As a Commissioner, I believe I also have a responsibility to promote these resources, including free smoke alarm replacements, youth life-jacket programs, and fall-prevention education. Our firefighters regularly engage with assisted-living facilities, while Ruby, our fire dog, helps teach children fire safety. We should continue expanding outreach so every resident knows how we can help keep them safe.

Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue Dist Seat 2

The Pinellas Suncoast Fire & Rescue District is one of four Special Fire Control Districts that provide fire rescue, safety, and Advanced Life Support services (ALS) to unincorporated areas of Pinellas County. Each District is also part of the integrated Pinellas County EMS system. This means that each District is required to respond if they are the closest unit to an emergency incident, even if the incident occurs outside of their District's borders. Each District is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners elected by the registered voters within the District. The Commissioners provide guidance in establishing and managing community programs such as CPR instruction, certified child safety seat installation, home safety inspections, and fire safety programs with local schools. The Board of Commissioners is also responsible for managing the budget and financial resources of the Fire Control District.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$500/month



Elizabeth "Betsey" McKenna

Party: Non Partisan

Campaign Email: betsy.mckenna480@gmail.com

Campaign Phone: (727)642-8200

Campaign Mailing Address: 480 Harbor Drive South Indian Rocks Beach FL 33785

Education: Graduate of the University of Richmond/Westhampton--in 3 years--Phi Beta Kappa

Professional Experience: Field Sales Manager-managing 1/3 of the State of Florida/Insurance Industry; Business Owner; Entrepreneur

Public Service: Current PSFRD Commissioner-Current Chair selected by fellow Commissioners; Past IRB Budget Committee-Chair; Past Vestry of Calvary Episcopal Church (18 years) Senior Warden;

What in your professional and personal experience distinguishes you from your opponents and makes you the best candidate for this position?

Having served through a very challenging period of upheaval within our Special Fire District, we were able to re-instill trust in our administration and hire a new Chief. Prior to that, meetings had deteriorated, morale was horrible, and we were at risk of losing valuable employees. This was the point at which my fellow commissioners elected me as Chair. With their support, meetings were brought under control, I was personally available to any personnel with concerns- giving us time for solution

Explain the top two issues and/or unique challenges facing this fire control district? If elected, what actions would you propose to address these issues or challenges (including potential budget cuts from the Property Tax Exemption Amendment)?

We built a resilient budget so we are not dependent solely on ad valorem taxes. Fire assessments provide a more stable base, and short term rentals now pay a fairer share of the additional inspection and service costs they create. Even with the potential impact of Amendment 3, our plan is to protect frontline services. We have done this while keeping costs low. A \$1 million home in our District pays about \$1,000 annually, compared with about \$1,800 in the Seminole dependent district.

Extreme weather and sea level rise are increasing the need for disaster response services while at the same time adding to the risks first responders face. What will be your approach to addressing these challenges?

We have a comprehensive storm plan built around a simple reality: after a major hurricane, outside systems may not be available. We have hardened stations, designed new facilities for post storm operations, and developed communications and operational capabilities that do not rely solely on Pinellas County infrastructure. Our station planning also considers future storm & flooding conditions. The goal is to keep our firefighters safe and keep the District operating when the community needs us most. We provide cancer insurance, annual Life Scan physicals, mental health education, and confidential access to a specialized psychologist at no cost. New stations include dedicated decontamination.

Is the fire control district adequately prepared, trained, and supplied with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other necessary resources to manage health crises and other similar situations? If not, what is needed?

Yes. We maintain the PPE, training, and resources needed for health crises, but firefighter health goes far beyond equipment. Firefighters face much higher cancer and behavioral health risks.

Do you feel that residents within the fire district understand the district's role and function in the community? If not, what would you do to help educate them?

Residents know we answer emergencies, but many do not see everything the District does. We have made education a priority. Each city has a commissioner representative, and I represent Indian Rocks Beach. Our Chief regularly attends city meetings, and we created an orientation program for city commissioners. We are now a CPR training center and are expanding community classes. Going forward, I want even more direct public education so residents understand our services, costs, prevention work, and future plans.



Daniel Mynsberge

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: Some college and a great deal of technical training

Professional Experience: over 23 years as a Professional Firefighter/EMT , retiring as Battalion Chief and over 33 years at American Red Cross Biomedical services retiring as Regional Manager of Fleet, Facilities and Logistics

Public Service: Many volunteer hours for Boy Scouts, Explorer Scouts, American Red Cross, Michigan Heart Assoc, IRB local events. Eagle Scout , first aid and cpr instructor, National Safety Council Defense Driving Instructor

What in your professional and personal experience distinguishes you from your opponents and makes you the best candidate for this position?

I have nearly 24 years of experience as a professional Firefighter/EMT retiring as Battalion Chief. I have education in fire command, hazardous materials, water rescue, aircraft rescue and firefighting, emergency medical, personnel management

and training, investigation, prevention, public relations and much more. I received the Medal of Honor and the Medal of Merit. My American Red Cross career spanned 33 years ending as Regional Manager of Fleet, Facilities and Logistics.

Explain the top two issues and/or unique challenges facing this fire control district? If elected, what actions would you propose to address these issues or challenges (including potential budget cuts from the Property Tax Exemption Amendment)?

This fire district is facing some growing pains. They are currently building and establishing new locations. These locations will need additional personnel, equipment, supervision. In addition, if proposed tax reductions are voted in, there may be an upcoming issue with funding. I have experience in budgeting with organizations that had financial challenges throughout my careers. There may be alternate funding resources along with budgeting efficiencies.

Extreme weather and sea level rise are increasing the need for disaster response services while at the same time adding to the risks first responders face. What will be your approach to addressing these challenges?

New and existing firehouses must be hardened to prepare for extreme weather events. The fire department will need to continuously reassess the fire and rescue demands for equipment training and safety of citizens and personnel. The future is unpredictable but, the fire department can meet these challenges by utilizing resources and forward looking planning. The PSFRD is a very agile and progressive group and will continue to scrutinize our readiness.

Is the fire control district adequately prepared, trained, and supplied with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other necessary resources to manage health crises and other similar situations? If not, what is needed?

I understand that the current equipment is meeting the needs of the fire department. In the near future, they will need more personal safety equipment, communications, fire apparatus and station equipment. The fire department equipment situation is always very dynamic. Changing expectations, rules and environments will always keep equipment needs a high priority.

Do you feel that residents within the fire district understand the district's role and function in the community? If not, what would you do to help educate them?

I think our local citizens are very unaware of the organization and operations our fire and rescue district perform. We need to be more involved in educating our citizens as to what this department, needs, does and how this is accomplished. There are many ways to facilitate this. As a Fire Commissioner, I will attend local meetings, events and solicit input, in an effort to promote and understand the Pinellas Suncoast Fire and Rescue District.

Seminole City Council

The City of Seminole operates under a Council-Manager form of government that combines the political leadership of elected officials in the form of a City Council, with the managerial experience of an appointed local government manager. The City Council consists of the mayor and six council members elected at large by all qualified electors of the City. The City Council is empowered to create ordinances, set municipal fees, enter into contracts and issue bonds to finance public projects. In addition, the City Council is responsible for producing an annual budget to support the efficient provision of municipal services and for appointing members of the Charter Review Board every five years.

Term: 3 years **Salary:** \$9,684/year

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Ray Beliveau

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: BSME in Mechanical Technology, RIT, Rochester, NY

Professional Experience: Manufacturing Engineering and Manufacturing Management positions in AZ and FL.

Public Service: Councilor, City of Seminole / 2nd VP, Suncoast League of Cities

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

Professionally, as a manufacturing engineer / manager, my 40 years in the profession has helped me use my "cost, quality & schedule" skills to run production facilities with companies in AZ and FL. These are transferable tools. Personally, my wife and I provided the environment of success for our son (a chief roadway designer) and daughter (a teacher working on curriculum development) become proud parents. Family is good for our community. In the community, I used my "love for volunteering" and have been a school mentor, soccer coach and a founding member of Seminole CERT and awarded the "Community Contributor" for support before, during and after "special needs" citizens for the evacuation / return in the most recent hurricanes.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

The City maintains the status of "the city no one wants to leave". A challenge, is enhancement of storm water, which is old, close to failing and undersize. I've encourage fellow councilors to approve city/grant funding, and contractor plans to support our Public Works. Ensuring the department has the tools / dollars needed to stay ahead. Another is the replacement of our "church converted" recreation center, while bandaging current facility. We are proud to be debt free, and huge loans are no answer. I contributed during "workshops" to break the undertaking into cost-effective bits, maintaining current structures, pursuing a contractor that will do a phases, so work and funding are matched to minimize borrowing needs.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3). What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

The city staff and council are currently holding workshops where instead of staff cuts, we are reviewing each departments services and the funding needed and reprioritizing the list, delaying where we can, as well as the need for "fees-for-service" charges or downsize and/or elimination of the service.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

The city of Seminole is "built out" along/within its current boundaries. But we have an exciting project, via a development agreement (DA) we just did a workshop on with Habitat for Humanity on the joint use of an aging church property for several over 55 / low income 2 and 3 bedroom duplexes. Also, a developer is working with a failing shopping plaza to build a 4 story apartment complex for approximately 700 residents and are in DA discussions. Our community Development is asked to apprise the council when future housing location options that can be reviewed and accessed to meet housing needs in Seminole.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

The City of Seminole meets the permitting needs by contracting with a permit service contractor that can move staff to the workload for permits. Also as covered earlier the council authorized a storm water infrastructure assessment and the needs assessment is receiving maximum grant writing to ensure funding matches project needs.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

I am the current 2nd VP on the Executive Committee for the Suncoast League of Cities (SLC) and as part of the Florida League of Cities (FLC) and our agendas and priorities are the preservation of "Home Rule". I am, and we have several Seminole councilors, that receive the FLC home rule award for our voice during session in Tallahassee.



Kadi Hendricks Tubbs

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: Troy University, Seminole High School

Professional Experience: Business Owner, Real Estate Broker, Nonprofit President, Journalist

Public Service: Seminole City Councilor

Facebook: www.facebook.com/kadiservingseminole/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/kadiservingseminole/

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I bring a lifelong connection to Seminole, years of community and nonprofit leadership, and firsthand experience currently serving on City Council. I grew up here, attended local schools, raised my family here, and understand what makes our community special. My experience on Council has strengthened my understanding of budgeting, public safety, infrastructure, parks, and responsible local government. I listen, work well with others, and take seriously the responsibility of protecting taxpayers while preserving the quality of life that makes Seminole a great place to call home.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

Two of Seminole's top challenges are maintaining aging infrastructure and keeping costs manageable for residents. We must continue investing in roads, drainage, stormwater systems, and other essential infrastructure while seeking grants and outside funding whenever possible. We also need to remain fiscally responsible as costs rise. I support careful budgeting, maintaining healthy reserves, prioritizing essential services and public safety, and making sure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely while protecting the quality of life our residents value.

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3). What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

If Amendment 3 passes, we will need to carefully evaluate its financial impact on Seminole. My priority would be protecting essential services, particularly public safety, infrastructure, stormwater, and the services our residents depend on. I would first look for efficiencies, grants, partnerships, and alternative funding sources before considering service reductions. Property tax relief is important, but we must also ensure that our city remains financially strong and that we do not sacrifice the services and quality of life our residents expect.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

As a real estate broker and property manager, I see firsthand how important it is to have housing options that working families can afford. Seminole needs more opportunities for families to live, work, and raise their children here, especially as we face concerns about declining school enrollment and possible school closures. I support responsible redevelopment, workforce housing, first-time homebuyer opportunities, and partnerships with the county, state, developers, and nonprofits. We need to

expand housing choices while protecting the character and quality of life that make Seminole a great place to live.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Seminole responded well to Hurricanes Helene and Milton, including issuing permits quickly and utilizing our strong CERT program. I support continued emergency planning, better communication, expanded online permitting, and strong coordination with county, state, and federal partners. While the FEMA 50% rule affects Seminole less than coastal communities, we should help any impacted residents understand and navigate the process.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

I believe the balance between state and local government needs to be redefined to better protect home rule. Florida's cities are not all the same, and a one-size-fits-all approach does not always serve residents well. The state has an important role in setting standards on issues of concern, but local governments should have the flexibility to address local needs. Local elected officials are closest to their residents and are in the best position to understand what works for their community.



Mike Lurie

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Education: Bachelor's Degree in Computer and Information Science from Florida State University

Public Service: Rotary Club of Seminole Past President, Greater Seminole Area Chamber of Commerce Director, Temple Beth-El Director

Facebook: facebook.com/mikeforseminole

Instagram: instagram.com/mikeforseminole

What in your professional and personal experience makes you the best candidate for this position?

I am the principle of a real estate business that specializes in the rental and management of commercial property. This has afforded me a lot of experience dealing with local municipalities including the Cities of Largo and Pinellas Park, Pinellas County, and the Seminole Fire District. I was also President of the Rotary Club of Seminole during the devastating 2024 hurricane season when I learned a great deal about disaster preparedness and response. Due to some foresight and planning on our part, we were the first organization to deliver water and ice to the residents of the Barrier Islands one day after Hurricane Helene hit. We were there days before FEMA arrived.

Describe the top two priority challenges facing your municipality. What specific actions would you propose to address these challenges?

Permitting, especially following Hurricanes Helene and Milton, has become a slow and unnecessarily complex procedure. It is one of my highest priorities to streamline this process. Stormwater management, is also somehow still a problem in some parts of the City. Even two years after Hurricane Milton, there are still areas in Seminole that flood during a heavy summer rain. Why has this not been addressed?

Whether or not to significantly reduce property taxes is being put before the Voters this November (Amendment 3).

What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through?

If Amendment 3 were to pass, the City will be forced to make cuts across the board. There will also be more non- ad valorem assessments added to resident's property tax bills just like the new stormwater assessment. The City may have to add a fire district assessment similar to the assessment levied by Unincorporated Pinellas County. There will probably also be fees implemented for services that used to be free to residents like Recreation Center and Library memberships. There could be an increase in the millage rate for non-homesteaded commercial and residential rental properties. This will force landlords to raise their rents to remain profitable. Amendment 3 will not result in a net tax savings. It will cause a tax shift.

Available housing for lower income families is still an issue in our area. How will you expand access to and availability of affordable and workforce housing, for both renters and homeowners?

Affordable housing is an issue all over Pinellas County, not just in the City of Seminole. When the City negotiates development agreements for new multi-tenant residential and mixed use projects, they should make more of an effort to ensure that enough units are set aside to provide housing for lower income households.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

The stormwater system in the City of Seminole needs a upgrade. There are still parts of the City that flood during a heavy summer rain. The City's budget needs to provide funding for this upgrade and Public Works should be directed to make this a priority. Permitting also needs to be streamlined. The entire process must be sped up. The City needs to allocate enough resources to the Building Department and the Fire Marshall so that permits may be issued much more quickly.

With respect to home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida

appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

The State of Florida is slowly and methodically chipping away at local rule. Over the past several years, there have been many efforts to control local policy from Tallahassee. They have passed new laws that overturn everything from vacation rental ordinances to municipal zoning rules. The Legislature is forcing a one-size fits all approach on every city and county in this State. Every municipality is different and has their own unique needs. The State of Florida should allow local voters and their representatives to make these decisions.

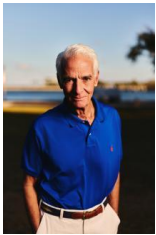
St. Petersburg Mayor

The city of St. Petersburg operates under a strong mayor and city council system. The Mayor is the chief administrative official of the city and not a member of the City Council. The Mayor is responsible for the administration of all city affairs, city departments and personnel, as well as the preparation and submission of an annual budget to the City Council. The Mayor appoints the City Administrator, city officers, boards and commissions, with City Council approval. The race for Mayor is non-partisan and the top two candidates who receive the most votes in the primary election advance to the general election. If a candidate for Mayor receives more than 50% of the votes in the primary, then that candidate is elected without proceeding to the general election.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$240,000/year

Click here to view the June 18th St Petersburg Mayoral Candidate Forum: https://youtu.be/DI7NCZIs20E?si=-Sd_uSQRSwMF8xw0

For a detailed video explanation of the role of Mayor: <https://youtu.be/5zi5IY40xRA>



Charlie Crist

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: Florida State University, B.S., 1978. Cumberland School of Law, Samford University, J.D., 1981.

Attended Wake Forest University before transferring.

Professional Experience: General Counsel, Minor League Baseball (Baseball Commissioner's Office); St. Petersburg Attorney, private practice; Attorney, Wood and Crist law firm; Attorney, Morgan & Morgan, Tampa; Distinguished Professorial Lecturer, Stetson University College of Law; Author, The Party's Over

Public Service: Former state legislator, Education Commissioner, Attorney General, Governor and U.S. Representative.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/charliecristfl/

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Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

St. Petersburg families feel the squeeze, and relief is worth fighting for. But this amendment cuts local revenue with no plan to replace it. Here, property taxes help fund police, fire rescue, and the storm resilience our neighborhoods count on after back-to-back hurricanes. As mayor, I will not cut public safety or storm recovery to cover Tallahassee's decision. I will protect core services, demand efficiency in every department, and press the state to fund the relief it promised instead of shifting the burden onto working families through new fees. Relief should not come at the cost of safe streets and a city ready to recover.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Resilience starts before the storm. I will harden our stormwater and wastewater systems, expand elevation and floodproofing grants, and strengthen emergency operations so response is faster and debris clears sooner. I'll have contracts for storm recovery signed before a storm hits. Recovery has to move at the speed of people's lives. I will staff up a dedicated storm-recovery permit team, restore fee waivers, and give every homeowner a real point of contact instead of a runaround. On the 49% rule, I will fight for fair pre-storm valuations, a clear appeals path, and mitigation dollars so families can rebuild safely. I will press Tallahassee and FEMA to add flexibility while protecting the flood insurance discount every resident depends on.

The Historic Gas Plant District represents 86 acres of land. Should the City sell the property as a single block to one developer, or should it retain ownership subdividing the land to maximize long-term public return? If you support a sale, do you believe the price should be set by a current fair-market appraisal?

When the Rays deal collapsed, it immediately delayed development needed to fulfill promises to residents and businesses displaced when the Trop was first built. And it created a rush to fill the void. Rushing is a mistake. The current City Council was right to demand a site study, and as Mayor I would ensure a people-first approach to determine how to best meet the needs of all residents, not just a select few. At a minimum, the site should provide opportunities for new affordable housing; living- and high-wage jobs, like the ones Moffitt would've brought; public amenities; and cultural attractions. We can accomplish all this and more by carefully weighing options and ensuring taxpayers aren't on the hook for pet projects.

The Governor and State Legislature recently banned local governments from participating in or promoting initiatives considered DEI. How will you ensure that all residents, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, feel welcomed, celebrated and their voices heard?

No state law can stop a mayor from leading with respect. Welcoming every resident is not a program. It is the job. I will make sure every neighborhood gets the same quality of city services, the same access to storm recovery, and the same voice at City Hall, no matter who lives there. I will keep government open. That means real listening sessions across every community, language and disability access, and a City Hall that answers to all of us. St. Petersburg is stronger because we are diverse. I will celebrate that openly and protect every resident's civil rights under the law. In this city, everyone belongs, and everyone will be heard.

Approximately \$440 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) had been earmarked for a new stadium and related infrastructure. TIF expenditures currently do not require a referendum. Should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

Tax increment financing is a legitimate tool, and it should lift up our neighborhoods, not just marquee projects. For routine redevelopment, the answer is transparency and real public input, not a new hurdle on every dollar. City Hall was ready to steer roughly \$440 million toward a stadium district with no property tax increase. Now the same City Hall wants to raise your property taxes for the basic infrastructure our neighborhoods needed all along. For commitments that large, residents deserve a genuine voice. The deeper problem is priorities. I will put neighborhoods first, tell you where every dollar goes, and answer to you for it.

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

As our state's Attorney General, I was Florida's top consumer advocate, working tirelessly to block rate hikes from Duke's predecessor, Florida Power & Light, and the Public Service Commission. At times, I did so in direct defiance of my own party, because it was the right thing to do. As Mayor, I will consider the results of the prescribed feasibility study and apply a lens that asks the only question that needs to be asked: What's best for St. Pete consumers? I hear more about out of control water bills than I do about electric bills, and I will work to address that issue as Mayor.



Ken Welch

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: He graduated from Lakewood High School. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Accounting from University of South Florida. He later earned a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Florida A&M University.

Professional Experience: Accountant, Florida Power Corporation/ Technology Manager, Family Accounting Firm

Public Service: Pinellas County Commissioner (2002–2022)/ Mayor of St. Petersburg (2022–present)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/KeepKenWelch

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Instagram: www.instagram.com/kenwelchstpete

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

Property taxes fund essential services residents rely on daily, including police, fire, parks, sanitation, and storm recovery. In St. Petersburg, these revenues support a \$1.2 billion budget delivering critical services to residents and businesses. Eliminating or reducing property taxes without a replacement revenue source would force difficult choices impacting public safety, neighborhood services, and resilience investments. We should pursue targeted relief for homeowners, particularly seniors and working families, while ensuring local governments keep providing essential services. changes should include sustainable revenue replacement and preserve local decision-making so cities keep delivering what residents deserve.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

Since taking office in 2022, we began overhauling permitting before Hurricanes Helene and Milton, improvements that proved critical during recovery. After the storms, we issued more than 14,500 permits and waived nearly \$2.9 million in fees. We're modernizing permitting through the Tyler platform, installing digital water meters citywide, and advancing my St. Pete Agile Resilience (SPAR) initiative and GO Bond proposal to accelerate infrastructure improvements. Our \$159.8 million Sunrise St. Pete award is helping residents and businesses recover, and I've advocated for FEMA 50% Rule reforms through the U.S. Conference of Mayors FEMA Task Force.

The Historic Gas Plant District represents 86 acres of land. Should the City sell the property as a single block to one developer, or should it retain ownership subdividing the land to maximize long-term public return? If you support a sale, do you believe the price should be set by a current fair-market appraisal?

I recently selected The Burg Bid, led by hometown developer Thompson Whitney Blake, for 58 acres of the Historic Gas Plant

District, alongside the Pinellas County Housing Authority for affordable senior housing on the Western 3rd Ave South parcel, with priority for Gas Plant descendants to return home. This was guided by our JHOP framework — Jobs, Housing, Economic Opportunity, Honoring the Promises made when this land was acquired. As a Gas Plant descendant, this began for me in high school, 45 years ago. The promise was never to sell at the highest price, but to build jobs, housing and opportunity for all — that's the balance I've sought. We now negotiate binding terms before ground breaks, turning this land into progress for our city.

The Governor and State Legislature recently banned local governments from participating in or promoting initiatives considered DEI. How will you ensure that all residents, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, feel welcomed, celebrated and their voices heard?

St. Petersburg's strength has always been our diversity, and every resident deserves to feel welcomed, respected, and heard. Regardless of changes in state law, my administration will continue focusing on equitable access to city services, neighborhood investment, workforce opportunities, and public engagement. We have invested in affordable housing, expanded youth programs, launched initiatives like the Future Ready Academy, and supported neighborhood programs citywide. We will continue celebrating our history and culture, supporting community events, and ensuring every resident has a voice in local government. Inclusion is not about political labels; it is about making sure every resident knows they belong in St. Petersburg.

Approximately \$440 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) had been earmarked for a new stadium and related infrastructure. TIF expenditures currently do not require a referendum. Should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

The previously approved TIF funding allocated in 2024 for stadium infrastructure is being reallocated to other infrastructure needs. I have met with the County Commissioners (with the exception of one Commissioner) and county administration regarding this reallocation, and the process should be completed by the fall. While Florida law does not currently require a referendum for TIF expenditures, robust public engagement, clear reporting on CRA redevelopment plans and public discussion are integral to the process.

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

I support the rigorous, data-driven work needed to determine whether municipalization serves St. Pete ratepayers — which is why I submitted, and Council approved, a feasibility study on municipal electric utility (MEU) operation. Residents deserve reliable, independent data on costs and benefits before any decision is made, not speculation. My immediate infrastructure priorities remain the stormwater work our city urgently needs — advancing the St. Pete Agile Resilience (SPAR) program and our GO Bond initiatives to protect neighborhoods from flooding and strengthen infrastructure for the storms ahead. I will continue evaluating the MEU question on the merits of the data, with affordability and reliability front and center.

St. Petersburg Council Member District 2

The city of St. Petersburg operates under a strong mayor and city council system. The St. Petersburg City Council is the non-partisan governing body of the City. The Council is responsible for legislating ordinances and resolutions, approving the city budget, appointing the charter review commission, and establishing a code of ethics for the city government and city employees. The Council consists of eight Council Members, elected from each of the eight districts of the City. Elections for the City Council are held in even-numbered years, usually with each election including four of the eight districts. In the general election, all eligible city voters vote "at large" for the candidates running in all of the Districts that are on the ballot.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$67,275/year

View the June 23rd Candidate Forum: <https://youtu.be/P47dxOjwPNA?si=Ekrf1u1CYgSzg5h>

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Courtney Bermudez

Party: Non Partisan

Education: Medix College, certified EMT

Professional Experience: LCAM @ Condominium Associates

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61574292421074

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

- candidate declined to respond -

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

- candidate declined to respond -

The Historic Gas Plant District represents 86 acres of land. Should the City sell the property as a single block to one developer, or should it retain ownership subdividing the land to maximize long-term public return? If you support a sale, do you believe the price should be set by a current fair-market appraisal?

- candidate declined to respond -

The Governor and State Legislature recently banned local governments from participating in or promoting initiatives considered DEI. How will you ensure that all residents, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, feel welcomed, celebrated and their voices heard?

- candidate declined to respond -

Approximately \$440 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) had been earmarked for a new stadium and related infrastructure. TIF expenditures currently do not require a referendum. Should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

- candidate declined to respond -

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

- candidate declined to respond -



Gabriel Hament

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: JD, University of Florida and Bachelor of Arts, University of Florida

Professional Experience: Current: Assistant Public Defender, 13th Judicial Circuit; Prior to law school: Investment Advisor Representative, Foundations and Charitable Accounts

Public Service: Current: Assistant Public Defender; Prior to law school I served on my school district's (Sarasota) financial advisory committee overseeing the district's reserve investment account (\$50 million) and ensuring proceeds from the optional 1-mil were allocated in alignment with the voters' intent.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579516929370

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

• The first question I will always ask when making budgetary decisions is "How will this impact public safety for our community?" Because there is a significant likelihood that fewer resources will be available for our first responders should the homestead exemption be increased to \$250,000 by 2028, I cannot support the constitutional amendment as drafted. Should it pass, the City will have to explore assessing an emergency services fee to maintain the current level of service. • Additionally, I oppose this amendment because it offers no relief for renters. • And finally, such a drastic restructuring of municipal finance and taxation will likely result in credit downgrades, increasing borrowing costs for critical infrastructure.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

• I support the \$600 million GO bond to accelerate the completion of upgrades to our stormwater management systems and hardening of key infrastructure to minimize service disruptions during the next major storm. I will also seek funding for a matching grant program for homeowners seeking to implement hardening measures such as improved property drainage, raising A/C and water heaters, and hurricane resistant windows and doors. • Residents encountered delay and frustration when seeking permits after Helene and Milton. We must be prepared to quickly augment the City's bandwidth with additional inspectors and clean-up personnel. To avoid triggering the 49% rule, the City should waive all costs and fees associated with permit approvals.

The Historic Gas Plant District represents 86 acres of land. Should the City sell the property as a single block to one developer, or should it retain ownership subdividing the land to maximize long-term public return? If you support a sale, do you believe the price should be set by a current fair-market appraisal?

• Public input should guide the redevelopment of the HGPD, while a thoroughly-vetted development partner should execute that vision. I support the Mayor's plan to work with the St. Pete Downtown Partnership and the Urban Land Institute to compile the last decade of charrette planning and public input, allow the community to examine the initial proposals and provide feedback, which will likely result in modifications to the proposals, and then select a finalist for the Council's approval. Sale of part or all of the land to a development partner, who will then execute the community's vision, could result in a significant windfall for the City and allow the City to reduce the amount borrowed under the \$600 million GO resiliency bond.

The Governor and State Legislature recently banned local governments from participating in or promoting initiatives considered DEI. How will you ensure that all residents, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, feel welcomed, celebrated and their voices heard?

• I am running as an openly gay candidate for City Council. I will be a strong LGBTQ+ voice on City Council and push back against this wave of discrimination and bigotry coming out of Tallahassee and Washington. I have been advocating for the protection and expansion of the civil rights of others for my entire adult life. My passion for civic advocacy led me to law school so that I could be equipped with the knowledge and credentials to take the fight for civil rights and equality to the next

level. Our campaign is proud to have received the endorsements of the Stonewall Democratic Caucus of Pinellas County and Equality Florida Action PAC.

Approximately \$440 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) had been earmarked for a new stadium and related infrastructure. TIF expenditures currently do not require a referendum. Should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

• Generally speaking, I support sending large bonding proposals to the voters for approval. At this moment, it appears the stadium funding discussion is moot with the Rays in negotiations with the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County.

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

• I support the City's June 4th vote to hire a third-party consulting firm to study the feasibility of creating a public utility. I am now waiting to read the study. My decision-making framework at this time is focused on weighing the potential long-term savings against (i) legal costs associated with acquiring the utility infrastructure through eminent domain, and (ii) any risk to the City's credit rating particularly in the context of the likely issuance of a \$600 million general obligation bond for storm resiliency projects and likely more debt issuance associated with infrastructure for the Historic Gas Plant redevelopment. *I completed this questionnaire without the use of AI.

St. Petersburg Council Member District 6

The city of St. Petersburg operates under a strong mayor and city council system. The St. Petersburg City Council is the non-partisan governing body of the City. The Council is responsible for legislating ordinances and resolutions, approving the city budget, appointing the charter review commission, and establishing a code of ethics for the city government and city employees. The Council consists of eight Council Members, elected from each of the eight districts of the City. Elections for the City Council are held in even-numbered years, usually with each election including four of the eight districts. In the general election, all eligible city voters vote "at large" for the candidates running in all of the Districts that are on the ballot.

Term: 4 years **Salary:** \$67,275/year

View the June 2nd, 2026 candidate forum: https://youtu.be/yFuvyHAZkXc?si=NIO8cP_8oxpPsKQQ

For a detailed video explanation of the role of City Council: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LdBHrgaWZo>



Linsey Grove

Party: Non Partisan

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Education: I received my Bachelor of Science in Public Health and Health Education from Central Michigan University in 2010. I earned my Master of Public Health in 2013 and Doctorate in Public Health in 2018 from the University of South Florida.

Professional Experience: Certified public health practitioner, civic leader, and CEO of The Hypatia Collaborative. She has over 10 years of experience in nonprofit capacity building, management, and community development, and has worked with federal, state, and local governments, as well as nonprofit agencies. She also taught at USFSP.

Public Service: She has served as president of the League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area, vice chair of the Pinellas County Charter Review Commission, and was appointed to the Pinellas County Council for Persons with Disabilities by Commissioner Charlie Justice.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61578190140982

Instagram: www.instagram.com/groveforstpete

Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

The financial pain Floridians are feeling is very real. However, if we wanted to provide financial relief for Floridians, our state legislature would work on reforming property insurance, investing in and expanding affordable housing, and expanding healthcare. If this referendum passes, I will work to ensure that we do not cut any services. There are limited ways for local governments to raise revenue via taxes; therefore, we may have to increase user fees for services to make up for the revenue losses. It is unlikely we could acquire federal and state grant funding and appropriations, given current budget cuts. Residents would likely see an increase in sales tax to raise revenue, which would disproportionately harm lower-income households.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

I believe that we need to continue to accelerate upgrades to stormwater infrastructure to reduce flooding, protect residents and property, and mitigate rising sea levels. With a comprehensive resilience plan, we can identify ways residents can help increase our city's resilience. For instance, the city could better coordinate with neighborhood associations to disseminate

information and resources. More can be done to help residents post-storm: educating them about federal, state, and local property damage programs, their criteria (ie. FEMA 49/50% rule), and ways they can prepare ahead of hurricane season (ex., having a proper property appraisal for potential assessments) and making it easier to navigate permits.

The Historic Gas Plant District represents 86 acres of land. Should the City sell the property as a single block to one developer, or should it retain ownership subdividing the land to maximize long-term public return? If you support a sale, do you believe the price should be set by a current fair-market appraisal?

Like our waterfront parks, we only get one chance to do this right. After many conversations with residents, some of whom are Gas Plant descendants, we need to ensure there is ample, diverse community input to drive the redevelopment process. Selling the 86 acres to one developer could restrict our ability to have a community-driven development process, maximize long-term public return, and meet the changing needs of our city. I believe other mechanisms can allow for city ownership, benefit residents, and ensure that the needs of our city (current and future) are met. I would like to see more Community Benefits Advisory Board oversight to ensure that this development has specific community benefits with accountability measures included.

The Governor and State Legislature recently banned local governments from participating in or promoting initiatives considered DEI. How will you ensure that all residents, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, feel welcomed, celebrated and their voices heard?

We can ensure that all residents feel welcomed, celebrated, and that their voices are heard by including language around gender and sexual orientation in our anti-discrimination language in our city charter. I also think that there will be instances where litigation will be needed to fully exercise our ability to protect and empower residents from different minority groups. I believe that through training, intentional culture, community partnerships, and creative marketing, we can ensure that our city makes everyone feel like they belong, are heard, and that their identities are celebrated.

Approximately \$440 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) had been earmarked for a new stadium and related infrastructure. TIF expenditures currently do not require a referendum. Should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

TIF dollars are tied to mechanisms like Community Redevelopment Areas—examples include the Intown and South St. Petersburg CRAs. The South St. Petersburg CRA has a citizen advisory committee made up of community members, appointed by the city and county, to determine how each year's budget is spent. I believe that the creation of a citizen advisory committee sets a precedent for other CRAs like Intown. Residents could advocate for an amendment to the Intown CRA that creates this kind of committee to create a community power-sharing mechanism for the long-term rather than only voting on one issue like the stadium via referendum.

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

I support the effort to study public power in St. Petersburg. We have some of the highest electricity rates in the state, and this may be one of many ways to increase affordability for residents. Thirty-three cities across Florida have created a public utility for their electricity to bring rates down, increase responses to outages, and invest in electrical infrastructure and renewable energy. I believe our residents deserve to have a choice in a service that we all use and need – especially when the contract is coming up for renewal.



Trevor Mallory

Party: Non Partisan

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Whether or not to reduce property taxes is officially a ballot amendment for this November. What services would have to be cut or how would you make up for revenue losses if this goes through? What, in your view, should be done?

My focus is making city government efficient, spending taxpayer dollars responsibly, and ensuring any tax changes don't come at the expense of public safety, infrastructure, or neighborhood quality of life. I will vote against the property tax proposal but, if it passes, I will evaluate our city's next steps based on these values.

Hurricanes Helene and Milton placed an unprecedented burden on municipalities and residents. What steps would you take to improve city capacity for future storm resilience and response? What can be done to better help residents recover and rebuild, including the issuance of building permits in a timely manner and difficulties stemming from the FEMA 49/50% rule. What changes are needed to improve this process?

The storms showed us that resilience has to be a year-round priority. We need to invest in infrastructure, improve communication with residents, and make rebuilding easier through permitting reforms and helping families navigate recovery. I've heard from homeowners frustrated by the FEMA 49/50% rule because a single contractor's estimate can dramatically affect the future of their home. Residents should be encouraged to get second opinions and multiple quotes, and the city should do everything possible to make the process fair, transparent, and easy to understand.

The Historic Gas Plant District represents 86 acres of land. Should the City sell the property as a single block to one developer, or should it retain ownership subdividing the land to maximize long-term public return? If you support a sale, do you believe the price should be set by a current fair-market appraisal?

This site is one of the most important public assets in our city, and any decision should maximize long-term benefits while

listening to the residents in the development process. My priority is ensuring redevelopment creates opportunity, honors the history of the community, and delivers lasting value for St. Petersburg rather than focusing solely on a short-term transaction. Proposed plans have to be evaluated case-by-case on that basis.

The Governor and State Legislature recently banned local governments from participating in or promoting initiatives considered DEI. How will you ensure that all residents, regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation, feel welcomed, celebrated and their voices heard?

Every resident deserves to feel respected and heard. While state law may change how programs are structured, it does not change my commitment to listening to all communities, ensuring broad representation in decision-making, and making City Hall accessible to everyone. Tallahassee can ban certain programs, but they can't ban good values.

Approximately \$440 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) had been earmarked for a new stadium and related infrastructure. TIF expenditures currently do not require a referendum. Should voters have the opportunity to approve or reject that spending via a ballot referendum?

Major public investments require transparency and public trust. Residents deserve a meaningful voice in decisions that will shape our city's future, and I support strong public engagement and accountability whenever significant taxpayer resources are involved.

The cost of some electricity in the county is expected to increase in the next few years. Clearwater and Saint Petersburg are looking into creating a public utility. Do you support this effort? Why or why not?

Residents and small businesses deserve affordable, reliable energy. I support studying all available options and choosing the approach that provides the best long-term value, reliability, and accountability for the people of St. Petersburg. A public utility in St Petersburg is a promising idea for lowering costs – we need to gather the necessary data to determine if that idea will bear fruit.

US Senator

The United States Senate is a legislative chamber in the bicameral (two houses) legislature of the United States, and together with the House of Representatives makes up the United States Congress. Each state, regardless of population, is represented by two senators, who serve staggered six-year terms. A senator must be at least 30 years old, a U.S. citizen for at least 9 years, and a resident of the state he or she represents. The current salary (2026) for rank-and-file members of the Senate is \$174,000 per year.



Neil Joseph Gillespie

Party: No Party Affiliation

Age: 70

Education: Wharton School, Evening Division, UPenn (ABA 1988); The Evergreen State College (BA 1995), Catholic school grades 1-12

Hometown: Ocala since 2005; Tampa-St. Pete 1993-2005, Philadelphia/Levittown PA 1956-1993

County: Marion County

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

Immigrants are essential for the U.S. economy. We need qualified, vetted, immigrants legally present in America. The de facto open border policy of the Biden administration was wrong. The Biden immigration policy has benefited the legal profession, not the American People. Business is great for immigration lawyers. But some like former lawyer Alexandra Lozano, "La Luz del Camino Legal", defrauded her clients. Most of my family came to America from Ireland. My maternal great-grandmother was Jewish. I have worked with and support immigrants are naturalized citizens. In Pennsylvania I was a licensed motor vehicle dealer with many immigrant customers. I support secure borders because we need to know who is in our country, who is in our home. Immigrants' background must be vetted. I support the lawful removal of people who enter the United States illegally, but not the spectacle created by activists confronting ICE. I also support a path to citizenship for immigrants who follow the rules.

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

Climate change itself is not a financial threat to the economy, but is an issue to be managed. Extreme reaction to climate change is a financial threat. Obama's 2009 "Cash for Clunkers" program is an example of an extreme reaction. The program scrapped 677,081 vehicles, which was a terrible waste. The Ford Explorer 4WD was the program's top trade-in according to the U.S. DoT. (Wikipedia). Americans still want this type of vehicle. This program "still frustrates car enthusiasts, mechanics, collectors, and budget-minded drivers more than 15 years later. [677,081] vehicles were deliberately destroyed under the Cash for Clunkers program. Not recycled after they wore out, not sold to families who needed affordable transportation, and not donated to people struggling to get by. They were intentionally taken out of service and reduced to scrap." (Yahoo Auto). Instead of scrapping vehicles, Obama could have provided checks to people to buy new vehicles and help the struggling auto industry.

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

My top three legislative priorities (not two) for the next congress: 1. Restore checks and balances in government, separation of powers. Lawyers admitted to practice are officers of the court, part of the judicial branch of government, and must not serve in

elected office in the legislature or executive branch. 2. Health care reform. I was born needing craniofacial surgery but my insurance denied coverage for surgery when I was age 18 under a preexisting condition clause. I propose national health coverage, with the ability to opt-out. Trial Lawyers add excessive costs, and force doctors to practice defensive medicine. 3. Guarantee the safety of Jews in the United States. America is the promised land that defeated fascism in Europe in 1945. Unfortunately, Israel cannot protect Jews. Its wars are creating antisemitism worldwide. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made peace with the Palestinians (Oslo Accords). But on Nov-04-1995, an Israeli, Yigal Amir, murdered Rabin, ending the peace plan. **"Freedom of speech" is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does "Freedom of Speech" mean to you?**

Freedom of speech is the right to express opinions and ideas without fear. First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." That means we are not a "Christian Nation" as some claim. Catholics, Jews, Hindus, and Muslims are not "Christians". Also, the right to "petition the Government for a redress of grievances" is under threat with our current broken court system. Twenty-one years ago (in 2005) I sued a Florida law firm for stealing money from my settlement in a civil case. The courts could not resolve the case after 20 years, so I dropped it in 2025. Too many people end up suing their crooked lawyers. One well-known case is "Take Care of Maya", Maya Kowalski's family, who sued their former attorneys over alleged mishandling of settlement funds.

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

U.S. District Judge Pamela Chen said, in Court Shorts, Separation of Powers: "This concept of separation of powers is what makes America great. It is absolutely the genius of our democracy." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVrb5mHFyvg> The duty to oversee federal agencies is found in the Constitution. Currently our government is corrupted by a failure of checks and balances, a failure of separation of powers in government. Lawyers admitted to practice are officers of the court, part of the judicial branch of government, and must not serve in elected office in the legislature or the executive branch. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, lawyers admitted to practice, and who wrongly served as president and vice president, created the current immigration problem with open borders. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, a lawyer admitted to practice, is wrongly serving in the executive (as governor), and was able to wrongly take \$10 million in taxpayer money, his "cherry on top", for his wife's charity.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

US citizenship comes with responsibilities. Take action now to get the documents needed to prove citizenship. The best way to prove US citizenship may be your US Passport. Keep your US Passport current. The State Department issues passports and can assist citizens. Perhaps the State Department should serve as a repository for the documents needed to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates. Proof of citizenship is important for secure elections, and a secure border. We The People need to know who is in our country, our home, and who is voting in our elections.

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

Parents have the most important role in the education of their children. My parents sent me to Catholic elementary school (grades 1-8) and Catholic high school (grades 9-12) where I was raised in Levittown, PA. The state, when acting "in loco parentis", is responsible for the child's safety at school. In higher education, students age 18 and older are generally considered adults for legal and institutional purposes. On September 27, 2016, I wrote President Obama about an African-American schoolgirl in Ocala who needed assistance attending public school, which is a federally protected activity under 18 U.S.C. § 245(b)(2)(A). The Ocala Star-Banner reported a racial incident at West Port High School where 3 students taunted the Black student while waving Confederate flags. The 15 year-old African-American victim being intimidated by whites was wrongly cited by the police in lieu of arrest. Obama never responded. Florida AG Pam Bondi failed to classify this as a hate crime. (FS 775.085)



Ashley Moody

Party: Republican

Campaign Website: www.moody.senate.gov/

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

- candidate declined to respond -

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

- candidate declined to respond -

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

- candidate declined to respond -

"Freedom of speech" is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does "Freedom of Speech" mean to you?

- candidate declined to respond -

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

- candidate declined to respond -

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those

citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

- candidate declined to respond –

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

- candidate declined to respond –



Angela Nixon

Party: Democratic

Age: 42

Education: University of Florida

Hometown: Jacksonville

County: Duval

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Campaign Phone: 4435386615

Campaign Mailing Address: 1100 Kings Road Unit 2565 Jacksonville FL 32203

What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

Comprehensive, compassionate reform with a pathway to citizenship for undocumented residents, fair treatment of immigrants, and asylum claims processed fairly and efficiently. Ending the detention and deportation system that lets corporations profit off family separation and cruelty. Immigration reform must also protect workers and prevent exploitation. Corporations too often exploit a broken system to create a workforce vulnerable to abuse, wage theft, and unsafe conditions. That hurts all workers. Every worker, regardless of their birth place, deserves fair pay, safe conditions, and full protection of labor laws. We should never let businesses profit by creating a second class workforce, paying immigrants below market rate or using immigration status to silence workers. A fair immigration system and a strong labor movement go hand in hand. America is strongest when we protect human dignity, uphold the rule of law and ensure that every worker competes on a level playing field.

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

Yes. Climate change is already imposing enormous costs on families, businesses, and governments. In Florida, we see it through rising insurance prices, rent, infrastructure damage, agricultural losses, and increased healthcare costs. Too often hurricanes result in working people being pushed out of their neighborhoods, while big developers buy up land at a low cost and turn it over for a profit. No one should profit off of human suffering ever. Climate change is not simply an environmental issue. It is an economic issue, a housing issue, an insurance issue, and a public health issue. Failing to address climate change will cost far more than investing in resilience, clean energy, modern infrastructure, and disaster preparedness today. Investing in resilient infrastructure will also create millions of jobs for Americans.

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

1. Medicare for all 2. Stopping corporations from causing excessive price spikes in groceries, fuel, and essential goods to pad their bottom lines.

"Freedom of speech" is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does "Freedom of Speech" mean to you?

Freedom of speech means that everyone has the right to express their opinions, beliefs, criticisms, and ideas without fear of government censorship or retaliation. It protects political dissent, journalism, religious expression, peaceful protest, artistic expression, and the free exchange of ideas that make democracy possible. Freedom of speech is one of the foundations of a free society because it allows people to challenge those in power, advocate for change, and engage in public debate.

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

The Constitution establishes a system of checks and balances. Congress has the authority and responsibility to oversee federal agencies because it creates laws, appropriates funding, and serves as an independent check on executive power. The President manages and directs the executive branch on a day-to-day basis, but congressional oversight is essential to ensuring transparency, accountability, and compliance with the law. Our democracy functions best when both branches fulfill their constitutional responsibilities.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

Every eligible citizen should be able to exercise their constitutional right to vote without facing unreasonable financial or bureaucratic barriers. If documentary proof of citizenship becomes required, I would support federal funding to ensure eligible citizens can obtain birth certificates, marriage certificates, passport records, and other qualifying documents at little or no cost. I would also support streamlined administrative processes, mobile document assistance programs, online verification systems where appropriate, and special accommodations for women whose names have changed through marriage or divorce. Voting rights should never depend on a person's income, geographic location, or ability to navigate complicated government systems. Our responsibility should be making it easier for eligible citizens to vote, not harder.

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

The federal government should ensure every person, regardless of where they are born or their family's income, has access to quality education and a secure future. This means expanding universal early childhood education. Childcare and early learning are foundational investments, not luxuries. It means strengthening public K-12 schools, investing in teachers, and closing funding gaps between communities, so a child's ZIP code doesn't determine their opportunities. Public education, including school meals, should be completely free. Schools should expand access to college-level coursework and dual enrollment. Public colleges and universities should be tuition free. We should expand trade schools and workforce training, with living stipends. We should invest more in education than incarceration. Education is a public good, not a privilege. A skilled, educated workforce strengthens our economy, increases innovation and helps ensure everyone has a chance to reach their full potential.

US House District 13

U.S. Representatives are elected every two years (no term limits) to serve the voters of a specific Congressional District. A Representative must be at least 25 years old, a U.S. citizen for at least seven years, and a resident of the state he or she represents. Duties include passing laws, serving on committees, electing the leadership of the House of Representatives, and originating all matters of taxation. Representatives maintain offices in their home district and in Washington, D.C., where they provide extensive constituent services. The current salary (2026) for a member of the House is \$174,000 per year.



Tony D'Arrigo

Party: No Party Affiliation

Age: 41

Education: Seton Hall University

Hometown: Brigantine, NJ

County: Pinellas

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

I support comprehensive immigration reform that is secure, fair, enforceable, and realistic. We need to secure our borders and ports of entry, give Border Patrol and immigration courts the resources needed to do their jobs, and modernize an asylum system that is overwhelmed and far too slow. At the same time, I support expanding legal pathways for people who want to come here, work, contribute, and follow the law. For longtime undocumented residents who have built lives here, stayed out of trouble, worked, paid taxes, and contributed to their communities, I support an earned pathway to legal status and, when appropriate, citizenship. Dreamers deserve permanent certainty rather than being used as political bargaining chips.

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

Yes. Climate change is a financial threat to our national economy because its costs ultimately land on American families, businesses, taxpayers, and local governments. More damaging storms, flooding, extreme heat, and other climate-related risks can increase insurance premiums, damage infrastructure, disrupt agriculture and supply chains, and make housing less affordable. In Florida, we see the financial consequences especially clearly through rising property-insurance costs and increased vulnerability of coastal communities. I support investing in resilient infrastructure, expanding affordable and reliable clean energy, encouraging American energy innovation, and protecting our natural resources. Climate policy should not simply mean imposing new costs on working families. We should pursue solutions that reduce long-term costs, strengthen American energy independence, create good-paying jobs, and leave a more resilient economy for future generations.

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

My top two legislative priorities would be 1. Lower the cost of living and strengthen economic security. I want to deliver meaningful relief for working and middle-class Americans by addressing healthcare costs, housing affordability, predatory lending and excessive interest rates, while protecting Social Security and Medicare. Government should make it easier for people who work hard to build a stable life, not continually watch more of their paycheck disappear. 2. Reform healthcare and make affordable coverage accessible to every American. Healthcare should not be a luxury or something families are afraid to use because of deductibles, premiums, or medical debt. I would work toward universal, affordable coverage while protecting Medicare and Medicaid and bringing greater transparency and competition to prescription drug and healthcare pricing. Both priorities come back to the same principle: Congress should spend less time serving parties, lobbyists, and special interests and more

"Freedom of speech" is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does "Freedom of Speech" mean to you?

Freedom of speech means the government should not silence, punish, or retaliate against Americans simply because it disagrees with their opinions, beliefs, criticism, or political viewpoints. That protection is especially important when speech is unpopular or challenges people in power. It does not mean every form of expression is legally protected in every circumstance, nor does it guarantee freedom from criticism or consequences imposed by private individuals or organizations. Constitutionally recognized limits exist for areas such as true threats, certain incitement, defamation, and other narrowly defined categories. As a member of Congress, I would defend the First Amendment regardless of whether I personally agree with the speaker. Free

speech cannot be a right we defend only when we like what is being said.

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

Both have important but different oversight roles. The President oversees the executive branch and is responsible for ensuring that federal agencies faithfully execute the laws. Agency leadership is generally accountable through the executive branch, subject to the structure Congress has established by law. At the same time, Congress has a constitutional responsibility to conduct oversight of federal agencies. Congress creates agencies, passes the laws they administer, appropriates taxpayer money, holds hearings, requests information, investigates misconduct, and can change the law when agencies exceed their authority or fail the public. I believe in that balance of power. No President should have unchecked authority over the federal government, and Congress should never surrender its responsibility to hold the executive branch accountable, regardless of which party controls the White House.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

If documentary proof of citizenship becomes a requirement for voter registration, then government has a responsibility to make sure eligible American citizens are not prevented from voting simply because obtaining the necessary paperwork is difficult or expensive. I would support legislation requiring free or very low-cost access to the documents needed to establish citizenship and identity, including certified birth and marriage certificates, along with straightforward procedures for people whose names have changed because of marriage, divorce, adoption, or other legal circumstances. This is particularly important for women, who are disproportionately affected by name changes. I would also support coordination between federal and state agencies so eligible citizens can verify their status without navigating an expensive bureaucratic maze. Election security and voting access should not be competing goals.

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

I believe education is primarily a state and local responsibility, but the federal government has an important role in ensuring every child has a genuine opportunity to succeed, regardless of ZIP code or family income. At the pre-school level, I support expanding access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education, particularly for working families and children in underserved communities. For K-12, federal policy should support—not micromanage—local schools. I support strong public schools, properly funded special education, free school breakfast and lunch, career and technical education, and ensuring that federal education dollars actually reach classrooms and students. For higher education, we need to address the enormous cost of college while recognizing that a four-year degree is not the only path to success. I support expanding affordable access to community colleges, trade schools, apprenticeships, and workforce training while demanding greater transparency.



Leela J. Gray

Party: Democratic

Age: 59

Education: Bachelor's degree in Mass Communications from Elon University in North Carolina Master's degree in Journalism from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania Juris Doctorate from Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Florida

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

Our immigration system is broken because politicians choose partisanship over solutions. Immigrants are vital to our heritage and economy — many have lived here for decades, paying taxes, and supporting the businesses that form Florida's backbone. In Congress, I'll push for immigration reform that secures our borders and treats immigrants with dignity. The Trump administration's approach to immigration is not only cruel, but lacks accountability and transparency, and in Congress, I will fight to restore humanity, common sense, and responsibility to the system for the American people.

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

In 2024, Hurricanes Helene and Milton wreaked catastrophic damage on Florida's 13th district. Two years later, our neighbors and small businesses are still rebuilding while navigating skyrocketing utilities and tripled property insurance rates. As a coastal community on the front lines, we see that climate change is an immediate economic threat. We must combat this crisis by growing our clean-energy economy and rewarding American businesses that innovate in clean energy technology and resilient infrastructure. As a retired Brigadier General, I also believe climate change poses a serious risk to our national security. We need a strategy that ensures energy diversity and reduces the threat to our environment. We cannot afford the cost of inaction.

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

In Congress, I will tackle the cost-of-living crisis by taking on corporations and insurance monopolies driving up homeowners, flood, and health premiums, and passing a real middle-class tax cut. I will also fight to restore integrity, transparency, and

accountability to our government by prosecuting corruption. I will lead to build consensus, rather than engage in partisan politics, to solve our most pressing problems.

“Freedom of speech” is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does “Freedom of Speech” mean to you?

I spent 30 years in uniform fighting for our Constitution and the freedoms it bestows on the American people. The freedom to speak out and to make our voices heard by our leaders and our fellow citizens is the bedrock of our democracy. It is what makes America unique, resilient, and the greatest force for liberty in the world. It is what differentiates us from the tyrants and authoritarian adversaries, and it is what truly makes all citizens equal. In our great republic, no Americans’ voice is more important than the next. As I have throughout my life, I will always fight to protect our freedom of speech.

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

It is the Executive Branch’s role to execute the laws and manage the federal agencies. It is Congress’ constitutional responsibility to fund the government and provide oversight to ensure the funding is being properly used and the laws are being executed. This Congress, including FL-13’s current representative, has failed to provide that crucial check and balance to the Executive Branch. We must require oversight that creates transparency and accountability for all agency action, including spending, rulemaking, policy implementation, and federal overreach.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don’t have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

Laws requiring documentary proof of US citizenship for voting burden married women who change their last name, people of color, and service members. Passports are prohibitively expensive, so in Congress, I would push for a federal framework that allows for a wide range of secondary documents to be able to vote, including military IDs, marriage certificates, birth certificates, and divorce documentation. I would push for a federal law that requires states and municipalities to waive all fees for records if the applicant declares it is for voter registration purposes. Nine percent of all Americans do not have access to their birth certificate so any laws requiring proof of citizenship should mandate a provision to allow those people to register without undue burdens in their registration process. We should direct federal and/or state funding for the creation of a plan such as mobile units sent to communities to assist anyone that does not have access to their documents or needs help.

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

President Trump’s dismantling of the Department of Education is a direct attack on public education in America. In Congress, I’ll fight to restore funding for K-12 public education, work to pay educators a fair, livable salary, and invest in apprenticeship and trade programs for high school students and graduates, so they can graduate with the skills to compete in today’s economy.



Anna Paulina Luna

Party: Republican

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

- candidate declined to respond -

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

- candidate declined to respond -

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

- candidate declined to respond -

“Freedom of speech” is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does “Freedom of Speech” mean to you?

- candidate declined to respond -

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

- candidate declined to respond -

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don’t have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

- candidate declined to respond -

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

- candidate declined to respond -

US House District 16

U.S. Representatives are elected every two years (no term limits) to serve the voters of a specific Congressional District. A Representative must be at least 25 years old, a U.S. citizen for at least seven years, and a resident of the state he or she represents. Duties include passing laws, serving on committees, electing the leadership of the House of Representatives, and originating all matters of taxation. Representatives maintain offices in their home district and in Washington, D.C., where they

provide extensive constituent services. The current salary (2026) for a member of the House is \$174,000 per year.

Click here to view the June 18th Democratic District 16 Candidate Forum: <https://youtu.be/MUXI71-sVHs?si=m9-UJEtSEvTNJ4S5>

[UJEtSEvTNJ4S5](https://youtu.be/MUXI71-sVHs?si=m9-UJEtSEvTNJ4S5)

Click here to view the July 9th Republican District 16 Candidate Forum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhYDPCMilww>



Mark Davis

Party: No Party Affiliation

Age: 42

Education: Some college - Purdue

Hometown: Kokomo, Indiana

County: Manatee County

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

I support comprehensive immigration reform that makes it easier to come here legally and creates a realistic pathway to legal status for the millions of undocumented people already living, working, paying taxes and raising families in our communities. We need secure borders, but security and cruelty are not the same thing. I support replacing ICE with an immigration system focused on lawful processing, public safety and accountability rather than mass detention and deportation. If someone has built a life here, contributes to their community and isn't a threat to public safety, our priority should be getting them documented, not tearing their family apart. America can enforce its laws without abandoning its humanity.

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

Yes. Climate change is already an economic threat, especially here in Florida. We see it in rising insurance premiums, stronger storms, flooding, damage to homes and businesses, and the enormous cost of rebuilding after disasters. Ignoring climate change doesn't make those costs disappear. It just pushes them onto homeowners, taxpayers and future generations. We need to invest in clean energy, strengthen our infrastructure, protect our coastline and make communities more resilient while creating good paying American jobs in the process. This isn't just an environmental issue. It's about protecting people's homes, jobs, businesses and wallets.

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

My number one priority is accountability. We have watched powerful people, corporations and government officials operate under a completely different set of rules than everyone else. That has to end. I support stronger congressional oversight, real consequences for corruption, banning members of Congress from trading individual stocks, getting corporate money out of politics and making sure no president, elected official or government agency is above the law. My second priority is universal healthcare. Healthcare should be a right, not something you lose because you lost your job or can't afford a \$2,000 monthly premium. Every American should be able to see a doctor without worrying that getting sick will bankrupt their family. Accountability first. Healthcare for everyone. Those are the two fights I'm going to Washington to take on.

"Freedom of speech" is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does "Freedom of Speech" mean to you?

Freedom of speech means the government does not get to decide which political opinions Americans are allowed to express. That protection matters most when the speech is unpopular, offensive or critical of the people in power. You don't need the First Amendment to protect speech everyone agrees with. But freedom of speech does not mean freedom from criticism or consequences, and it does not require private citizens or businesses to provide someone a platform. There are also narrow legal exceptions, including true threats and certain forms of incitement. Most importantly, the First Amendment belongs to everyone. Democrat, Republican, independent, protester, journalist or ordinary citizen. I don't want any president or political party deciding which voices America is allowed to hear.

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

Both, but they have different constitutional responsibilities. The President leads the executive branch and is responsible for executing the laws through federal agencies. Congress writes the laws, controls federal spending and has a fundamental responsibility to conduct oversight of those agencies. That congressional oversight cannot disappear simply because the President doesn't like being questioned. Congress must be able to investigate misconduct, demand information, hold hearings and ensure taxpayer dollars are being spent legally and responsibly. This is exactly why checks and balances exist. No President should have unchecked control over the federal government, and Congress should never surrender its responsibility to hold an administration accountable, regardless of which party controls the White House.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

I oppose creating unnecessary barriers between American citizens and the ballot box. American citizens have a constitutional right to vote, and the government should not create a system where someone effectively loses that right because they cannot afford or easily obtain a particular document. This could especially affect married women whose current legal name differs from the name on their birth certificate, as well as older Americans and people with limited access to records. If Congress ever

requires documentary proof of citizenship, then government has an obligation to make the necessary documents readily accessible and free, provide reasonable alternative methods of verification and ensure eligible citizens are not removed from voter rolls simply because of paperwork. Election security matters. So does the right to vote. We can protect both.

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

Education should primarily be shaped by teachers, parents and local communities, but the federal government has an important role in making sure a child's ZIP code doesn't determine the quality of education they receive. At the preschool level, I support expanding access to affordable early childhood education. In K-12, federal resources should help communities properly fund public schools, special education, school meals and programs serving disadvantaged students. We also need to dramatically improve teacher pay and stop losing great educators because they can't afford to remain in the profession. For higher education, we need affordable paths through college, community college and skilled trades without burying young Americans in decades of debt. The federal government's job isn't to micromanage classrooms. It's to make sure every kid in America actually gets a fair shot.



Sydney Gruters

Party: Republican

Age: 44

Education: University of Florida, Dual Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Criminology

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County: Sarasota County

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

As a mom and lifelong Floridian, keeping our communities and children safe is my top priority. I support President Trump's efforts to secure our borders and enforce the rule of law, because every family deserves to feel safe at home. I also believe we must improve and streamline our legal immigration system so that those following the law are not buried in red tape, making it nearly impossible to navigate for business owners and individuals alike. We can have both strong border security and a legal system that works. I am committed to practical solutions that protect our neighborhoods, uphold our laws, and give families and employers the certainty they need.

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

In Florida, we live with the reality of hurricanes, flooding, and rising insurance costs every day. As someone who has answered calls firsthand after natural disasters, helping families access relief and navigate federal agencies, I have seen firsthand how these challenges affect family budgets and small businesses. We need to invest in strong infrastructure, expand access to resources that work for our families, and ensure coverage stays affordable. I believe we can protect our environment while keeping our economy strong. My focus is on practical, commonsense steps that keep Florida families safe and help our local economy thrive.

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

My top priority is making life more affordable for working families in Southwest Florida. That means cutting taxes, reducing red tape that drives up prices, lowering the cost of housing and insurance, and making sure families can afford everyday essentials. My second priority is delivering first-class constituent service and serving as the true liaison between the people of Florida's 16th Congressional District and their federal government. For over 20 years, I have worked side by side with families as they navigate federal agencies, helping them solve problems and deliver real results. In Congress, I will bring that same dedication every day to serve our district.

"Freedom of speech" is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does "Freedom of Speech" mean to you?

Freedom of speech is at the heart of what makes America the land of the free and home of the brave. It means every person has the right to speak up, share their beliefs, practice their faith, and take part in our Constitutional Republic without fear. I believe our universities should welcome open discussion and civil discourse, parents should have a voice in their children's education, and journalists should be able to do their jobs freely. I have seen how important it is to protect these rights for everyone, and in Congress I will never waver in defending the First Amendment.

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

Congress and the President both play important roles in ensuring that federal agencies serve the American people. Congress is responsible for oversight and making sure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely, and I take that duty seriously. I support President Trump's efforts to hold agencies accountable and make government work for families, not for bureaucracy. Our system of checks and balances is there to protect our freedoms. In Congress, I will work hard to ensure every agency is transparent, efficient, and focused on serving the American people.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

Every eligible American should have the opportunity to vote and trust that their vote counts. Requiring proof of citizenship to register is a commonsense way to protect our elections. American women are more than capable of navigating this process. We run households, build careers, care for families, and handle more before 9 AM than most people do all day. Our state agencies exist to help all citizens access the records they need. I will work to ensure these processes are accessible to everyone. We can have secure elections and make it easy for eligible citizens to register, and I stand committed to both.

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

I believe parents and local communities know best when it comes to education. For preschool and K-12 education, the federal government should leave curriculum decisions to parents, teachers, and local school boards. I also support accountability and transparency for colleges that receive federal dollars. My experience leading the New College Foundation showed me what happens when a public university loses its way and stops serving students. The transformation of New College, returning it to academic excellence and its core educational mission, showed me what is possible when leaders dare to demand better. That is the model I will carry to Congress: hold institutions accountable, protect students, and always put families first.



Kelly Kirschner

Party: Democratic

Age: 51

Education: B.S. / M.A. - Georgetown University

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County: Sarasota

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What reforms to the US immigration system do you support? Why?

Our broken immigration system has created victims of congressional failure: families who want a secure border, people who have lived, worked, and raised families here for years, those who followed the legal immigration process, employers trying to do the right thing, and communities frustrated that Washington keeps choosing politics over solutions. I support reforms that secure the border, enforce the law firmly, fairly, and humanely, speed up legal immigration and asylum cases, create an earned pathway to legal status for long-term undocumented residents who have contributed here, and hold employers accountable when they knowingly exploit undocumented workers. We can't keep spending billions on political spectacle while employers who knowingly profit from illegal labor walk away clean. We can protect our borders without abandoning our values. Government exists to solve real problems, not create new ones.

Do you believe climate change is a financial threat to the economy of the nation? Why or why not?

Yes. Call it climate change or risk management, Gulf Coast families are paying the price. Our economy depends on tourism, agriculture, fishing, and real estate, and every one of those industries is absorbing the costs. Insurance premiums are skyrocketing, families are losing coverage, hurricanes leave communities rebuilding for years, and our farmers and fishermen face growing financial risks from stronger storms and changing conditions. This isn't tomorrow's problem; it's today's bill. As Mayor, I held Florida Power & Light accountable, and I've seen firsthand what happens when families are left waiting for insurance payments and federal help after a hurricane. Government's job isn't to debate reality. It's to respond to it. In Congress, I'll fight for a national reinsurance backstop to lower insurance costs, a fully funded and proactive FEMA, disaster and crop insurance that work when families need them, and investments that make our communities more resilient before the next storm.

Name your top two legislative priorities for the next Congressional term.

Government is supposed to solve problems for the people it serves. My first priority is lowering the cost of living for Gulf Coast families. That means lowering insurance and healthcare costs, reducing prescription drug prices, expanding affordable housing by increasing the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, preventing Wall Street investors from buying up single-family homes, and restoring competition by enforcing antitrust laws so dominant corporations can't use their market power to drive up costs for families. My second priority is protecting the healthcare and retirement security people have earned. I'll work to make healthcare more affordable and accessible, protect people with pre-existing conditions, strengthen Medicare and Medicaid, restore recent healthcare cuts, protect a woman's freedom to make her own healthcare decisions with her doctor, and ensure Social Security remains a promise kept. Congress should be solving these problems, not making them worse.

"Freedom of speech" is included in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Exactly what does "Freedom of Speech" mean to you?

Freedom of speech protects every American's right to question those in power without fear of government retaliation. That protection matters most when the speech is unpopular, critical, or uncomfortable. As Mayor, I welcomed tough from residents, neighborhood activists, and the press because accountability makes government better. It should never matter whether I agree with what someone says because that's exactly when constitutional rights matter most. I also believe every citizen's voice should matter more than unlimited money in politics. That's why I led the successful passage of Florida's toughest municipal campaign finance reform law. I'll bring that same commitment to Congress by working to overturn Citizens United and restore the principle of one person, one vote. Freedom of speech means the government can't punish you for your political views, your criticism of those in power, or your peaceful dissent. Full stop.

Who has the right, Congress or the President, to oversee federal agencies?

Congress. Oversight isn't about protecting Congress or limiting a President. It's about protecting us. The Constitution gives Congress the responsibility to ask hard on our behalf because executive branch decisions affect our families, our freedoms, and our future. When Congress stops asking those or demanding answers, we lose one of our strongest protections. Today, Congress too often refuses to do that job. Representatives should ask: Is it lawful? Is it constitutional? Is it serving the public? Is anyone using public office for private gain? When there is credible evidence, Congress must investigate and follow the facts. Those aren't partisan. They're the job. As Mayor, I held Florida Power & Light, developers, and my own city government accountable because accountability matters. I'll bring that same commitment to Congress, regardless of who is President. That's what representation means.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those citizens, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

Every eligible American should be able to vote, and every legitimate vote should count. If Congress considers new proof-of-citizenship requirements, the first question should be: does this improve election integrity, or does it simply make it harder for eligible citizens to vote? Government exists to solve real problems, not create new ones. If government creates a new requirement, it has a responsibility to make compliance free, simple, and accessible. It shouldn't pull the rug out from under people by changing the rules right before an election. That means no-cost replacement of vital records, straightforward ways to resolve name changes, extended timelines so no one loses their right to vote because of a paperwork backlog, and a secure process for eligible voters to resolve documentation issues without being disenfranchised. The goal should be protecting both election integrity and every eligible citizen's constitutional right to vote.

What role do you believe the federal government should play in education at the pre-school level, K-12 level and higher education?

Every child deserves access to an excellent education that opens doors, regardless of how much money their family has. Opportunity shouldn't depend on wealth or political connections. The federal government's role is to expand opportunity and protect the public institutions that serve students. I've dedicated much of my career to that mission. I co-founded UnidosNow, which has helped more than 1,000 first-generation students earn admission to the nation's top universities debt-free, and I built workforce and lifelong-learning programs at Eckerd College. I've also seen what happens when politics supersedes students. Our community recently lost nursing, teacher education, hospitality and veterans' programs when USF Sarasota-Manatee was dismantled and its campus transferred to New College. Education funding, whether state or federal, should expand opportunity, not be diverted for political patronage. I'll fight to ensure education dollars serve students, families, and communities.

Governor

The Governor is an elected constitutional officer and the highest state officer in Florida. A governor serves as the chief executive officer of a state. Everyday job duties include oversight of the state's executive leaders, policy review, as well as big picture budget management. Serves 4-year term with a limit of 2 consecutive terms. The Governor's 2026 salary was \$141,400.



Dean Ocean Abrams

Party: No Party Affiliation

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Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

- candidate declined to respond -

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

- candidate declined to respond -

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

- candidate declined to respond -

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

- candidate declined to respond -

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

- candidate declined to respond -

What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?

- candidate declined to respond -

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your

view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -



Charles Burkett

Party: No Party Affiliation

Age: 65

Education: BS from University of Miami

Hometown: Miami Beach

County: FL

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Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

I'm running for Governor because Florida deserves a leader who answers to Floridians—not political parties, donors, or insiders. I have built a successful life, achieved political success, and bring decades of real-world common sense to this race. My campaign is focused on two issues: affordability and representation. Florida has become too expensive because politicians have allowed reckless development and population growth without ensuring our infrastructure can keep up. Our roads, schools, water, housing, and other resources have limits. When more people compete for those limited resources, costs rise. We should put the interests of Floridians first and stop treating endless growth as automatically good for our state. Floridians also deserve a Governor who represents them—not wealthy donors and special interests. Both parties have candidates who have accepted enormous contributions and are indebted to those who funded them. I haven't, and I won't be. I will put Floridians first.

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

All actions necessary, including appointing environmental experts to ensure that our water, air and natural resources are never compromised. This is a huge issue, without clean air, water and natural resources, nothing else matters.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies.

At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

"Healthcare" has become a meaningless term—buried under bureaucracy. The result is a system that is expensive, confusing, and increasingly unaffordable. We need to return to basics: Restore incentives for doctors to practice independently, reduce red tape and litigation, and put doctors—not government and insurers—in charge of care. Restore the doctor-patient relationship and make Right to Try and "My Body, My Choice" absolute. Rebuild a genuine, risk-based insurance market. Insurance should protect against unknown future events—not conditions that already exist. Radically simplify choices with five standardized plans, each available with low, medium, and high deductibles. Insurers would compete on price and service. Provide a compassionate safety net for people with pre-existing conditions without destroying the private insurance market.

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

Conserve it all. Stop making more land available for profiteers and developers. Florida is Full! Fix what's broken, enhance what is good and make life for Floridians already here incomparable. I will never support concrete jungles in Florida or paving over everything we hold dear.

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

Our leaders have badly wasted resources to help create affordable housing. Florida's poor don't need another handout. They need a real shot—and the support to seize it. Too many Floridians remain trapped in dangerous, blighted neighborhoods where poverty, crime, drugs, and hopelessness have become entrenched. We must stop funding programs that reward dependency while failing to deliver results. My proposed Oasis Act redirects existing developer incentives to Florida's worst and most forgotten slum parcels, where land is cheapest and every taxpayer dollar can go further. Each Oasis would provide secure, dignified housing, parks, playgrounds, and limited retail and offices. Residents would agree to clear rules: no crime or drugs, school attendance for children, and work or training for adults. Those who break the rules would give their place to someone ready to succeed. The goal is simple: create safe launchpads out of poverty—not permanent dependency. A smart tough love solution.

What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?

Florida's children deserve an education system built around one principle: their future matters more than the bureaucracy. Require strict performance accountability from teachers, principals, and school boards. Hire great teachers, pay them well, and reward excellence. Give struggling teachers a fair opportunity to improve—but if they consistently fail, replace them. Good enough is not good enough for our kids. Stop treating schools like factory-style educational warehouses where every child is pushed through the same system. Every child is different. Some will pursue college; others will become entrepreneurs, skilled tradespeople, technicians, healthcare professionals, and more. Expand rigorous academic, vocational, technical, apprenticeship,

and entrepreneurial opportunities so students can discover their strengths and build real futures. Give parents meaningful choices, teachers greater freedom to teach, and schools accountability for results. Our kids deserve the best.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

Florida needs a property-insurance market built on competition, risk, and honesty. Allow all financially strong insurers to compete aggressively and offer a wide range of deductibles, allowing homeowners to accept more risk for lower premiums. Lawmakers must also tell homeowners the truth: not every home or location can be made economically insurable against hurricanes. Poorly built homes, flood-zone properties, and homes near large bodies of water are inherently higher risks. Safer, hurricane-resistant homes should receive lower premiums. For homes that can be fortified, allow the full cost of approved hurricane-resistant upgrades to be offset against property taxes. For homes that cannot reasonably be fortified or insured affordably, provide a one-time incentive to move into a new hurricane-resistant home by allowing the new homes homestead exemption to be tied to the full sale price of the existing home. This will dramatically drop taxes on the newly acquired home.



Jeffrey Peter "Dr. Jeff" Datto

Party: No Party Affiliation

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DrJeffDatto/

Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

- candidate declined to respond –

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

- candidate declined to respond –

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

- candidate declined to respond –

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

- candidate declined to respond –

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

- candidate declined to respond –

What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?

- candidate declined to respond –

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -



Moliere Dimanche

Party: No Party Affiliation

Age: 38

Education: St. John's River State College

Hometown: Orlando

County: Orange

Campaign Website: [noMOEcorruption.com](https://www.noMOEcorruption.com)

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Campaign Mailing Address: 3200 N. Hiawassee Rd., #682362 Orlando FL 32868

Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

Public corruption is the reason I entered this race. It has affected my life and I know that there are other people out there just like me who wonder when something will ever be done about it. My two biggest issues are: 1) Public corruption: From corrupt HOAs to predatory lenders and these accelerated foreclosures, corruption is always at the core. You solve corruption by actually holding folks accountable, and when you do that, all of the other problems will fix themselves. There's no accountability in Florida at the moment, and that is about to change. 2) Homeownership: Florida, at present, allows these big corporations to buy up entire subdivisions, and that's the recipe for decreasing homeownership. I want to do what they did in Baltimore and Michigan where they awarded abandoned properties to people for \$1 as long as they put in the sweat equity and made the necessary

improvements. That program beautified those communities and it's coming to Florida.

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

The most important thing is making sure that the plan to erect data centers is stopped in its tracks so that not a single additional data center can waste any more water, which has impacts beyond environmental concerns. After that, Florida needs to expand its conservation efforts while we implement a referendum policy whenever contracts are procured to further develop on protected lands. The policy should always be "An Election on Protection". It should always require a vote when it comes to protected lands.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

The first step is expanding DOGE-style auditing systems to address waste. That's a bigger problem than most people realize and has a direct impact on federal resistance to cover state costs. At the same time, the state also needs to have a separate reinsurance policy in place to reimburse providers for high-cost procedures. We also need to be more lenient in the renewal process because a lot of people get kicked off for procedural noncompliance when they shouldn't. Florida has a 15 billion dollar surplus right now, and simply needs a governor in favor of releasing some of that money to make sure every single person gets the health care they need.

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

We have a lot of very vulnerable environments on our shore that need adequate preservation resources, despite being flagged already. For example, we set a record last year with 434 manatee deaths for this exact reason, and loose restrictions on the use of motor vehicles in these areas. The state hasn't been doing enough and needs to ramp up its conservation efforts. I will direct the Secretary to enforce my "Election for Protection" initiative so that acquisition is the one thing to be decided by voters in these areas.

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

This is dear to me. The problem is that, at present, Florida is very friendly towards mortgage companies, developers and HOAs. At the same time, Florida is very hostile towards the unhoused, and financially insecure. I'm the opposite. I plan to give Floridians a real, tangible shot at homeownership through a system that awards abandoned properties to the public. This will eventually solve the need for housing and allow those who work multiple jobs and still can't afford the cost of living to save their money, build their wealth and power up the economy. Maryland's "Fixed Pricing Program" is the model I want to use, minus the \$90k repair cost qualification. The qualifications will be based on the value of the home, and Floridians will own those homes as long as they pledge to homestead the residence for a minimum of 5 years. **What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?**

I like the current School Choice policy. I am opposed to many of the curriculum changes because my oldest son is getting a very different education than I got when I was his age. Education has become politicized, and I believe that that is the main contributor towards failing to retain teachers. My youngest sons are home schooled, and this is probably the most important thing to parental rights: we need to allocate grants that give home-school parents the same resources that are available in public schools. Also, a lot of parents pursuing school choice have complained about limited transportation, and in some case, no transportation for students. We need to hire more bus drivers if School Choice is going to be worth its salt. **Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?**

This is exactly why we need to abolish property taxes on homestead property. It will offset the high cost of property insurance, which is roughly double the ad valorem taxes, on average. Florida is prone to hurricanes, which is the driving force behind high insurance costs. But there are years when we have no hurricanes, so that needs to be taken into account moving forward. I'm a proponent of penalizing insurance providers and awarding grants to the Red Cross for natural disaster-related costs. That, in theory, and if implemented properly, would relieve insurance providers of concerns they have about weather related claims. We should be working with entities like Red Cross during peak hurricane season to allow some middle ground between homeowners and insurance providers.



Byron Donalds

Party: Republican

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Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

- candidate declined to respond –

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

- candidate declined to respond –

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies.

At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

- candidate declined to respond –

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

- candidate declined to respond –

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness

- candidate declined to respond –

What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?

- candidate declined to respond –

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -



Scott Jewett

Party: Libertarian

Age: 67

Education: MBA

Hometown: San Diego, CA

County: Florida

Campaign Website: www.scottjewett.com/

Campaign Phone: 7144259277

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Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

I'm running because Floridians are governed too much and served too little. Both major parties keep expanding the state's reach into our wallets, our land, and our private decisions, and neither seems interested in stopping. I want to offer people a real alternative: a government that stays small, respects your rights, and trusts you to run your own life. Two issues where I think a governor can actually move the needle. First, affordability. Housing, insurance, and taxes are crushing working families, and much of that cost traces back to government itself. Cut the regulatory drag and stop distorting these markets, and prices come down. Second, property rights and land. Florida is paving over its farms and handing the bill to taxpayers. I'd protect landowners from overreach and let people keep what's theirs. I won't promise to fix everything. I will promise to get government off your back and out of your way

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

Clean water and healthy coasts depend on liberty, not bureaucracy. The strongest protection is holding polluters accountable—if someone fouls your water or shoreline, that's a violation of your property rights, and the state should back you in court, not shield the offender. I'd stop subsidizing the problem: taxpayer-funded roads, utilities, and insurance make it profitable to overdevelop wetlands and coastline. End those distortions and the market stops building where it shouldn't. Enforce the laws already on the books, and keep decisions local—people living near a spring protect it better than a Tallahassee bureaucrat. My biggest idemake Florida the world leader in thorium nuclear power. Thorium reactors are safer, produce far less waste, and deliver abundant clean energy without the emissions or land footprint of fossil fuels. That's how we power growth and protect the environment at the same time—real energy independence, cleaner air and water.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

I won't pretend the state can spend its way out of this. When Washington cuts subsidies and shifts Medicaid costs down, Tallahassee can't just backfill the gap without raising taxes Floridians can't afford. So, we have to make care itself cheaper, not just move who pays for it. Most of what drives prices up is government-made. Certificate-of-need laws block new hospitals and clinics from opening. Licensing rules keep nurse practitioners and pharmacists from providing care they're trained to give. Regulations shield incumbents from competition. Strip those away and supply grows, prices fall, and access widens—especially in rural counties. I'd also expand price transparency so people can actually shop, and clear the path for direct primary care, telehealth, and charity clinics that serve people the current system leaves behind. Protect the truly vulnerable, yes. But the real fix is competition, not bigger bills.

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

Public land is a public trust, and the Trustees should manage it that way—carefully, transparently, and for the people who own it, which is all of us. I take conservation seriously. Florida's springs, parks, and coastlines are irreplaceable, and once they're paved over, no budget brings them back. I support Florida Forever, but I'd hold it to a clear standard: buy land with real conservation value, pay a fair price, and favor willing sellers and conservation easements over eminent domain. Government shouldn't take property to protect it. And what we already own should be managed well before we keep acquiring more—too many parks are underfunded and neglected while the state chases new purchases. I'd also keep parks as parks. Recent pushes

to open state parks to golf courses and hotels betray the trust. These lands belong to Floridians, not developers with connections in Tallahassee. Protect what we have. Acquire wisely. Keep it honest.

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness

- candidate declined to respond –

What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?

My long-term plan is simple: put families in charge and let the money follow the child. I support school choice and vouchers because parents, not bureaucracies, know what their kids need. Competition raises quality across the board, including in public schools. On teacher retention, choice helps here too. Free schools from top-down mandates and paperwork, pay good teachers what they're worth, and give them real authority in their classrooms. People don't leave teaching because they stop caring—they leave because the system wears them down. On curriculum, I trust parents and local communities over distant officials. Keep standards focused on the fundamentals—reading, math, critical thinking—and out of the political tug-of-war. On parental rights, they're not a slogan to me. Parents have the primary say in their children's education and upbringing, and the state's job is to respect that, not override it. Empower families. Support teachers. Keep it local.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

The public has it right. Property taxes are a real burden, but insurance is what's breaking people's budgets right now—and unlike taxes, premiums have been climbing fast with nothing to show for it. When less than 8% of what homeowners pay in premiums actually comes back as repairs, something is badly broken. That gap doesn't disappear into thin air. It's eaten up by litigation, bloated adjusting, and plain mismanagement inside the system. Floridians are paying more and getting less, and too much of Tallahassee's "reform" has just shielded the industry instead of protecting policyholders. I've actually done the work here—I wrote a bill to change Florida's insurance regulations and fix the incentives that let this happen. The answer isn't more bailouts or a bigger state role in the market. It's transparency, accountability, and real competition so companies win by paying claims fairly, not by dodging them. Lower the cost. Make insurers deliver what people paid for.



David Jolly

Party: Democratic

Education: Juris Doctor (J.D.) cum laude from the George Mason University School of Law; Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in History from Emory University

Hometown: Dunedin, Florida

County: Hillsborough

Campaign Website: davidjolly.com/

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Campaign Phone: 727-386-9204

Campaign Mailing Address: P.O. Box 266 Indian Rocks Beach FL 33785

Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

I am running for Governor to build a Florida that is more affordable, more accountable, and more focused on the future. I believe government should improve people's lives, the economy should work for everyone, and every Floridian deserves dignity and equal opportunity. The first issue where I can make the greatest difference is affordability. Rising costs for housing, insurance, healthcare, childcare, and groceries have made it harder for working families to get ahead. I will support policies that strengthen workers' rights, raise wages, and create pathways to good-paying jobs. The second issue is education. Florida needs a renaissance in public education. I will fully fund neighborhood public schools, raise teacher pay, reduce overcrowding, expand student support services, and protect the independence and excellence of our colleges and universities. By making Florida more affordable and investing in education, we can create opportunity and security for every Floridian.

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

Florida's environment is one of our greatest assets. Our beaches, springs, wetlands, rivers, and coastlines support tourism, recreation, agriculture, and local communities. Protecting them requires stronger stewardship and long-term planning. Florida must accept the science of climate change and invest in resilience against sea level rise, stronger storms, flooding, and saltwater intrusion. Building resilient infrastructure today will protect communities and save taxpayers money in the future. I support stronger enforcement against polluters, investments in wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and accelerated restoration of the Everglades, springs, rivers, and estuaries. We must reduce harmful algal blooms and ensure clean water for future generations. We also need smart growth policies that protect wetlands, beaches, state parks, and environmentally sensitive lands from overdevelopment.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

Equitable, affordable healthcare is declining as federal subsidies shrink and states shoulder more Medicaid costs. Florida should expand Medicaid and bring home billions in taxpayer dollars now funding care elsewhere. Expansion would help hundreds of thousands access affordable coverage and reduce uncompensated care that drives up premiums. As costs shift to states, we must also improve how care is delivered by investing in preventive services, behavioral health, maternal health, chronic disease

management, and care coordination to reduce avoidable ER visits. Stronger fraud prevention, transparency, and efficient administration are essential. Rural communities face provider shortages and hospital closures, so Medicaid dollars should stabilize local hospitals, expand telehealth, and support community-based networks. Healthcare shouldn't depend on income or geography. By expanding Medicaid and modernizing care delivery, Florida can improve outcomes and strengthen rural communities.

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

Florida's public lands are part of our shared heritage, and conservation is essential to our long-term prosperity. As Governor and a member of the Board of Trustees, I would prioritize responsible stewardship, public access, and protecting natural resources for future generations—not short-term interests. I support fully funding and expanding Florida Forever to preserve wildlife corridors, wetlands, springsheds, and working lands that safeguard water quality and reduce flooding. State parks should remain focused on conservation and recreation, not commercial development. I also support coastal resiliency, beach restoration, seagrass protection, and science-based planning to address sea level rise. Strategic land acquisition and partnerships with local governments and conservation groups are key to protecting habitats and preventing costly environmental damage. Florida's environment is the foundation of our economy and quality of life, and we must protect it for those who come after us.

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness?

Florida's housing crisis is pushing homeownership and stable rentals out of reach for working families, seniors, veterans, and young people. As Governor, I would focus on lowering costs by fully funding the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund and ensuring those dollars build affordable and workforce housing as intended. I support smart-growth infrastructure, mixed-income development, and removing unnecessary local barriers that restrict supply. Stabilizing the property insurance market is also essential, as rising premiums are driving the affordability crisis. To reduce homelessness, I support a Housing First approach that pairs permanent housing with mental health care, addiction treatment, job training, and healthcare. We must prioritize veterans, seniors, youth aging out of foster care, and families at risk of eviction. Housing is essential infrastructure, and every Floridian deserves safe, stable, affordable homes.

What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?

Florida needs a ten-year renaissance in public education; a long-term plan to strengthen public education by supporting teachers, improving curriculum, and keeping parents engaged as partners. The teacher shortage stems from years of low pay, rising living costs, burnout, and policies that have left educators feeling undervalued. I would prioritize higher salaries, housing assistance, loan forgiveness, and stronger mentorship and professional development to improve recruitment and retention. We must also improve school climate by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy and expanding mental health and behavioral supports. Curriculum should be high-quality, evidence-based, and focused on literacy, math, science, civics, financial literacy, CTE, and media literacy, free from partisan interference. Parents deserve transparency and meaningful involvement, and parental rights laws should encourage collaboration rather than conflict. We must value educators and support Florida families.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

Floridians are right to be more concerned about property insurance than property taxes because insurance costs have become one of the biggest threats to housing affordability. Premiums—not taxes—are now the primary driver of rising housing costs, affecting renters, homeowners, retirees, and condo owners. Stabilizing the insurance market must be a top priority. I support exploring a state catastrophic fund to remove natural-disaster risk from the private market, lower premiums, and create long-term price stability, while ensuring the system is actuarially sound and transparent. I also support no-interest state-backed loans to help condo owners cover required structural repairs that many—especially seniors—cannot afford. Florida must invest in resilience programs, strengthen homes against storms, and increase industry accountability so rate hikes are justified. Insurance affordability and housing affordability are inseparable, and restoring stability must be a core priority.



Frank J. Russo

Party: No Party Affiliation

Age: 65

Education: UCF Business School, BS

Campaign Website: russo2026.com/en/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61585026176233

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Campaign Mailing Address: 4627 Van Kleeck Dr New Smyrna Beach FL 32169

Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

I firmly believe that when you have been blessed, you bless others. Growing up with my 10 brothers and sisters right here in Florida, enjoying an excellent education in this state, and building a successful career, including several businesses here in Florida has given me an extraordinary life for me and my children. Now, as a father and grandfather, I want to ensure that everyone in Florida has the opportunities I have had. As I talk with people all over the state, I hear the same concerns about being able to afford day to day life, and I know we can tackle skyrocketing housing costs by addressing the insurance crisis in our state. I have decades of experience in the insurance industry, and I am certain we can return power in the hands of the

People. I am running to ensure families are supported by their leaders - from the local school boards to the governor's office, with transparency and without overregulation.

What actions can be taken to protect Florida's environment, water quality and coastlines from pollution, overdevelopment and climate change?

We need to update disaster infrastructure and systems in advance of any future catastrophic weather event. We should also require transparency and enforce the law for developers from AI data centers to lower-income housing, so the people of Florida are not left paying the costs, without enjoying the benefits of innovation and economic expansion. There are natural solutions to water conservation through purification and reuse as well as large-scale waste breakdown to convert trash to rich soil for agricultural use, which natural technologies I will pursue to protect Florida's rich ecosystems and support its agricultural economy, which is a matter of food security for the state.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

The quality of healthcare provided is a fundamental issue: we should not manage illness, but seek wellness and healing for Floridians. Our healthcare systems must restore patients' and parents' autonomy and rights, requiring informed consent and prioritizing health for people, not profits for hospital administrations or drug companies. Medicaid costs can also be brought down by investigating and cleaning up the largescale fraud in the system in Florida - we should audit the program and use the recovered funds in a publicly-held trust for Florida's families and communities in need.

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

We have an obligation to protect our land and its resources given to us by God. Preservation of natural beauty and conservation research funding should be a priority for the state. State acquisition of land for this purpose is good, but must not override individual property rights of Florida's residents. Any conservation project needs to be clearly outlined and held accountable on timelines and budget, and perform according to the goals of preserving Florida's ecosystems and coastline. We also need to stop the use of toxic chemicals and find natural solutions to protect the people and wildlife of Florida - like using UV light for pest control, along with other innovations.

Insufficient housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address affordable housing and reduce homelessness

We must increase transparency on tax-payer supported housing projects, including those given tax breaks to provide greater access to affordable housing. Where developers receive any such public support, we have to hold them accountable on measurable, long-term delivery of actual affordable housing. We need to prioritize ensuring our teachers, nurses, first responders, hospitality workers, and other critical service workers have available affordable housing in the communities in which they serve. We must completely reform insurance in this state and return power to the People by electing the Insurance Commissioner once again; and we can reduce the burden of property tax on residents through creative consumption tax on high revenue residents and businesses to cover essential local services even while raising the homestead exemption. We can do these things while also encouraging further development and investment in this state.

What is your long-term plan for public education, specifically concerning teacher retention, curriculum changes, and the role of parental rights laws?

I spent time in the classroom, substitute teaching, and listening to students, teachers, and parents: Florida needs to raise the average teacher salary to at least \$75,000 a year while strengthening recruitment of talent, retention of qualified teachers, and building classroom support and community investment and engagement with local schools. Florida should also lead the way in expanding education by honoring the skilled trades that are desperately needed in this state; I have called on business leaders in the state to give to a publicly held trust to pay for apprenticeships for students to learn and build experience in the trades. Florida must also not allow technological innovation, including artificial intelligence, to push Florida's workers out of the economy - we can prepare students for the tech advances of the future, and also educate those prepared to build their own businesses and give them the tools to succeed as entrepreneurs.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

I agree that insurance is a major cost driver. I propose a catastrophic hurricane and wind protection program providing up to the first \$500,000 of eligible residential property coverage for hurricane and wind risk. The goal would be to reduce the hurricane-wind portion of eligible premiums by as much as 50%. I would also pursue stronger consumer protections and a Florida Homeowner Bill of Rights designed to give homeowners greater transparency and accountability when dealing with insurance companies. My plan further calls for pursuing a constitutional amendment to restore an elected Insurance Commissioner, rather than continuing with a position appointed through the current system. We should also create a public Property Insurance Reform Dashboard and require greater transparency around actuarial studies, financial analysis and the implementation of major reforms.

Attorney General

Chief law enforcement officer of the state, responsible for enforcing laws, protecting consumers, protecting civil rights, and defending the state in court actions. Is one of the three elected officials who make up the Governor's Cabinet. Serves 4-year term with a limit of 2 consecutive terms. The 2026 salary was \$139,988.



Jose Javier Rodriguez

Party: Democratic

Campaign Website: www.jjr.vote/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/JoseJavierJJR/

Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

- candidate declined to respond -

Do you agree that the fines and fees in the criminal court system disproportionately impacts people of color and people living in poverty? If so, what would you propose to change this situation?

- candidate declined to respond -

Will you pledge to uphold the Florida Constitution, Florida Statutes and constitutional amendments approved by the voters, even if you do not agree with them?

- candidate declined to respond -

What do you believe to be the role of the state government regarding federal immigration practices?

- candidate declined to respond -

How would you enforce the Florida Sunshine Law and Public Records Law to ensure public access to governmental meetings and records?

- candidate declined to respond - **How will you evaluate the effectiveness of the special agents dedicated to investigating alleged election law violations and ensuring transparency on their findings to the public?**

- candidate declined to respond -

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

- candidate declined to respond -



James Uthmeier

Party: Republican

Campaign Website: jamesforfl.com/

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Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

- candidate declined to respond -

Do you agree that the fines and fees in the criminal court system disproportionately impacts people of color and people living in poverty? If so, what would you propose to change this situation?

- candidate declined to respond -

Will you pledge to uphold the Florida Constitution, Florida Statutes and constitutional amendments approved by the voters, even if you do not agree with them?

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What do you believe to be the role of the state government regarding federal immigration practices?

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The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

- candidate declined to respond -

Chief Financial Officer

The CFO is responsible for overseeing the state's finances: paying bills, collecting taxes, monitoring investments, and auditing state agencies. Also serves as the State Fire Marshal and oversees the insurance, banking, and funeral industries. Is one of three elected members of the Governor's Cabinet. Serves 4-year term with a limit of 2 consecutive terms. The 2026 salary was \$139,988.



Blaise Ingoglia

Party: Republican

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Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

- candidate declined to respond –

What do you think should be done to stabilize the housing and business insurance markets against major environmental disasters, such as hurricanes, floods and fires?

- candidate declined to respond –

What do you believe is driving Florida's property insurance crisis? What do you plan to do as the CFO to remedy the situation?

- candidate declined to respond –

What do you believe should be the investment priorities for the State of Florida? How do you balance these priorities against social issues that may be used to influence financial decisions?

- candidate declined to respond –

What are the most significant changes or risks you see on the horizon for Florida's economy?

- candidate declined to respond –

The CFO of Florida fights financial fraud, waste, and abuse within state agencies and with state funds. Which should have the highest priority for audits – state agencies or local governments?

- candidate declined to respond –

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

- candidate declined to respond -



Annette Taddeo

Party: Democratic

Age: 59

Education: University of North Alabama - Bachelor's Degree, Dartmouth Tuck School of Business - Executive Education

Hometown: Miami, FL

County: Miami-Dade

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Campaign Mailing Address: N/a Miami FL 33156

Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

I am running for Chief Financial Officer because Florida families deserve a CFO who will fight for them. The CFO should be an independent watchdog for consumers and taxpayers – not a lapdog for the governor or anyone else. The two most compelling issues facing Floridians are affordability and anti-corruption. The CFO has direct regulatory oversight over the insurance industry, yet homeowners are being crushed by rising insurance costs while the government looks the other way. The insurance industry has more sway in the CFO's office than the voters. As CFO I will hold insurers accountable and demand transparency. And Tallahassee's culture of pay-to-play politics has eroded public trust. The cost of corruption to the Florida taxpayer is too high and getting higher. I will crack down on corruption, enforce transparency laws, audit no-bid contracts as required by law, and put Floridians – not political insiders – first.

What do you think should be done to stabilize the housing and business insurance markets against major environmental disasters, such as hurricanes, floods and fires?

Florida's insurance market is failing homeowners and businesses when they need it most – after a hurricane, a flood, or a fire. Insurers file for rate increases claiming losses, while funneling profits to affiliated companies hidden from regulators. Florida's

own Office of Insurance Regulation commissioned a report proving it – and buried it. As CFO, I will demand full transparency and expose the affiliate arrangements insurers use to hide profits while charging Floridians the highest premiums in the nation. Stabilizing the market also requires protecting the resources Florida needs when disaster strikes. The same emergency fund that should be there for the next hurricane was drained to spend \$1.2 billion on Alligator Alcatraz – over \$1 million a day, twenty times more than most other detention facilities. No-bid contracts, no audits, no accountability. As CFO I will ensure Florida's emergency fund is protected for actual emergencies, not political stunts.

What do you believe is driving Florida's property insurance crisis? What do you plan to do as the CFO to remedy the situation?

Florida's property insurance crisis has one root cause: a system rigged to protect carriers over consumers. Insurers claim losses to justify rate increases while funneling billions to their affiliated companies. Florida's own regulator commissioned a report proving it – and buried it rather than share it with lawmakers. Floridians have been paying for a lie. As a five-year member of the Florida Senate Banking and Insurance Committee, I saw firsthand how the system is failing consumers – and as CFO, I will put consumers first. I will demand full transparency in the affiliate arrangements insurers use to hide profits, strengthen oversight, aggressively enforce consumer protections, and increase competition so homeowners get the coverage they pay for. The politicians in Tallahassee who are supposed to hold insurers accountable have looked the other way. I will not.

What do you believe should be the investment priorities for the State of Florida? How do you balance these priorities against social issues that may be used to influence financial decisions?

Florida's investment priorities should serve one master: the long-term financial security of Florida families and taxpayers. That means investing state funds to maximize returns, protect pensions, and build fiscal resilience – not to advance any political agenda, left or right. The CFO oversees billions in state investments and has a fiduciary duty to put Floridians first. That duty is being violated when state funds are used as political weapons – like Hope Florida funds diverted from sick children to pay for political advertising. That is not fiscal management. That is corruption. I have stood up to my own party when Floridians' interests demanded it. I will apply that same independence to every investment decision – grounded in data and fiduciary responsibility. The moment we start using public funds as political leverage – in any direction – we put Florida families at risk.

What are the most significant changes or risks you see on the horizon for Florida's economy?

Florida's economy faces three significant risks. First, the housing and affordability crisis. Florida families and workers are being priced out of the state. Businesses cannot find workers because people cannot afford to live here. As a small business owner, I have lived this firsthand. Second, corruption and the erosion of public trust. When billions flow through no-bid contracts with no audits, when Hope Florida funds meant for sick children get diverted to political ad campaigns, and when those charged with oversight look the other way – Florida families lose faith. An economy cannot thrive without trust, and right now that trust is broken. Third, one-party rule with no checks and balances. When the CFO acts as a guard dog for the governor instead of a watchdog for taxpayers, no one is asking the hard . That is how economies fail. As CFO I will be the independent check this state desperately needs.

The CFO of Florida fights financial fraud, waste, and abuse within state agencies and with state funds. Which should have the highest priority for audits – state agencies or local governments?

State agencies – without question. The CFO has a legal obligation to audit state agencies, and right now that obligation is not being met. The current CFO created FAFO to target Democratic-led local governments while ignoring his own legal obligations – auditing no-bid contracts and publishing all contracts on the FACTS database as required by Florida Statutes. That is pure politics. The biggest concentrations of state dollars – and the biggest opportunities for fraud, waste, and abuse – are at the state level. Billion-dollar no-bid contracts, Hope Florida funds diverted from sick children, emergency funds drained for political projects – none of that happened at the local level. It happened in Tallahassee, under this unelected CFO who would rather play politics than do his job. As CFO I will prioritize auditing state agencies first. Every audit will be professional, objective, and without partisan favoritism. Accountability means everyone – including the governor's office.

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

Florida's 12 million acres of public lands are a public trust – not a political asset. I believe in fully funding Florida Forever, protecting state parks from development pressure, and preserving our coastal areas and Everglades for future generations. As a State Senator I fought to protect Florida's springs from corporate water extraction, championed Everglades restoration funding, supported the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, and worked to ban fracking . Florida's natural environment is not just our heritage – it is the foundation of our economy, our tourism industry, and our quality of life. As a Cabinet member and Board of Trustee I will vote to protect public lands, oppose any effort to privatize or develop Florida's natural resources, and ensure that conservation decisions are made in the long-term interest of Floridians – not developers or political donors.

Commissioner of Agriculture

The Commissioner safeguards the public through testing and inspection of food products, regulation of deceptive and unfair business practices, reduction of wildfires, promotion of environmentally safe agricultural practices, and management of public lands. The Commissioner also supervises the issuing of various state vocational licenses licenses to carry concealed weapons or concealed firearms. Is one of three members of the Governor's Cabinet. Serves 4-year term with a limit of 2 consecutive terms. The 2026 salary was \$139,988.



Joey Mendoza Atkins

Party: Democratic

Age: 40

Education: B.A. Cum Laude – Major: Political Science – Minor: Criminal Justice at Florida Atlantic University; J.D at University of Toledo College of Law; Master's Degree in International Economic Development at Milano School for Policy, Management, and Environment;

Hometown: Jupiter

County: Palm Beach County, Florida.

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Campaign Phone: 7867918426

Campaign Mailing Address: 21 NE 22nd Street, #904 Miami FL 33137

Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

I'm running to make Florida healthy and affordable again, and to protect our natural resources from overdevelopment. Just two examples of common-sense issues that aren't covered in my other answers later on include cannabis legalization and protecting immigrant farm workers. A majority of Floridians voted to legalize cannabis in 2024, and researchers believe that legal access to cannabis could potentially alleviate the opioid addiction crisis among veterans. However current Commissioner Wilton Simpson has aggressively restricted hemp products and consistently thwarted attempts to legalize marijuana. Meanwhile, protecting immigrant farm workers would also help stabilize food costs by preventing artificial labor shortages, reducing crop spoilage, and saving farmers millions in turnover and recruitment expenses. When workers leave due to indiscriminate and extremist state government crackdowns or poor conditions, production plummets, driving up grocery prices due to scarcity.

Florida is a top U.S. agricultural producer, producing most of the winter vegetables for the country. Yet, food insecurity, especially for children, continues to grow and will likely worsen as changes to SNAP benefits push costs to states. What legislation or programs would you support to help feed Floridians? I would strengthen and expand "Farm to Food Bank" Projects: Utilizing TEFAP Farm to Food Bank Project Grants helps local growers harvest, package, and transport less-marketable or excess crops directly to local feeding programs. I'd double down on programs like Farmers Feeding Florida to subsidize operational costs for local farmers while stabilizing the food bank supply chain. I would advocate for and allocate more state budget dollars toward food bank infrastructure. Investing directly in cold-storage expansions and local distribution fleets allows contracted agencies to manage sudden influxes of USDA foods without incurring localized deficits. I would implement stricter, more transparent pre-award audits on regional contractors to ensure that selected distribution agencies have the validated refrigeration, staff, and geographical outreach to fulfill their contracts before emergency food is bottlenecked. I would also establish cross-agency contingency plans with DCF.

This elected office regulates gun licenses. What legislation or programs would you support to protect our youth and the public at large from gun violence?

I would support common-sense pro 2nd Amendment state-level public safety bills such as safe storage mandates: requiring firearms in homes with minors to be secured with a trigger lock or inside a safe, and Universal Background Checks: endorsing bills that close private sale and gun show loopholes by requiring background checks for all firearm transfers.

What measures do you propose to better manage agricultural runoff of fertilizers and other pollutants which contribute to harmful algae blooms and reduced water quality?

I would work to actually implement the consensus-based scientific recommendations for water quality improvement made by Governor DeSantis's Blue-Green Algae Task Force, including strengthening compliance and enforcement mechanisms with robust data-based water quality monitoring and explicit, measurable, science-based directives for policy change. Since the issuance of the Task Force recommendations, ecological conditions in Florida have not improved and, in many cases, they have worsened. At the same time, I'd also look to subsidize innovative waste conversion, for example proposing economic tax credits or grant incentives for livestock facilities to convert animal manure into commercial, stabilized bio-fertilizers, reducing raw waste runoff.

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

My philosophy is to fiercely protect Florida's public and rural lands and agricultural heritage from overdevelopment. Left in their natural state, our lands keep an immense amount of climate pollution out of the atmosphere. FL loses an equivalent of 10 acres of natural and working lands every hour to development, and with them, the invaluable natural goods and services they provide. I also want to stop the rapid, unregulated sprawl of hyperscale AI data centers across Florida. AI data centers drive up electricity demand and costs, and strain water supplies from the Floridan aquifer: a single large data center can consume as much electricity as a small city. Working to ensure that recently enacted legislation prohibiting utility companies from passing the costs of AI grid upgrades onto consumers is actually enforced will be critical, however, massive developments in rural areas would still continue to threaten local habitats and natural resources.

What is the most important issue facing agriculture and forestry in Florida? How do you balance the needs of agriculture, forestry and the green industry (nurseries, landscapes) with environmental concerns?

The most critical issue facing Florida's agriculture and forestry sectors is rapid urban sprawl and land-use conversion. Rising land values and population growth are accelerating the loss of vital rural and green spaces to residential development, which

threatens both the state's economic viability and its natural ecosystems. Florida's agriculture sector is undergoing rapid transformation due to biological shocks, environmental stressors, import competition, and accelerating urbanization. Citrus greening, laurel wilt, and hurricane-related damage have sharply reduced yields and acreage, while rising imports erode market share and depress prices. Urban development and recreational land-use expansion are accelerating land-value increases, which in turn drives farmland loss and abandonment. There is an urgent need for integrated strategies that improve resilience, strengthen land conservation, and enhance the long-term competitiveness of FL's agricultural sector.

What are the key issues of concern for Florida consumers, and what ideas do you have to improve the Division of Consumer Services?

Property insurance and rent inflation, aggressive debt collection, and predatory scams are some of the key issues currently squeezing Floridians. We consistently rank fourth in the nation for per-capita debt collection complaints, and nearly 47% of state debt collection complaints cite abusive, predatory, or threatening behavior by collectors. One idea would be to launch a searchable, real-time database displaying consumer complaints by company name (similar to the federal CFPB portal) to deter deceptive local trade practices through radical transparency. Other ideas include creating a centralized "Single Digital Doorway" intake portal to instantly route complaints to the precise jurisdiction without forcing consumers to navigate bureaucratic mazes, and to transition the division's primary focus from educational brochure distribution to robust enforcement, particularly when it comes to renter's rights.



Wilton Simpson

Party: Republican

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Why are you running for this elected position? What are the two most compelling issues on which, if elected, you feel you can make a difference?

- candidate declined to respond -

Florida is a top U.S. agricultural producer, producing most of the winter vegetables for the country. Yet, food insecurity, especially for children, continues to grow and will likely worsen as changes to SNAP benefits push costs to states. What legislation or programs would you support to help feed Floridians?

- candidate declined to respond -

This elected office regulates gun licenses. What legislation or programs would you support to protect our youth and the public at large from gun violence?

- candidate declined to respond -

What measures do you propose to better manage agricultural runoff of fertilizers and other pollutants which contribute to harmful algae blooms and reduced water quality?

- candidate declined to respond -

The Florida Cabinet, acting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, manages over 12 million acres of public lands. What is your philosophy on conservation, acquisition, and protection of natural resources, including Florida Forever projects, state parks, and coastal areas?

- candidate declined to respond -

What is the most important issue facing agriculture and forestry in Florida? How do you balance the needs of agriculture, forestry and the green industry (nurseries, landscapes) with environmental concerns?

- candidate declined to respond -

What are the key issues of concern for Florida consumers, and what ideas do you have to improve the Division of Consumer Services?

- candidate declined to respond -

State Senator 18

Serves staggered 4-year terms with a limit of 2 consecutive terms. There are 40 Senators. The 2025 salary was \$29,697 (plus travel and subsistence). Only requirement is to pass a balanced state budget.



Nick DiCeglie

Party: Republican

Campaign Website: nickdiceglie.com/

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What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

- candidate declined to respond -

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

- candidate declined to respond -

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

- candidate declined to respond -

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

- candidate declined to respond -

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -



Karla Kemp

Party: Democratic

Age: 55

Education: Masters Degree

Hometown: Saint Petersburg

County: Florida

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What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

There are so many issues that are so important, but the biggest complaint is the cost of living, and when asked for what aspect, the cost of homeowners insurance is the first response I hear. As a Licensed Insurance Agent, I KNOW what they are doing to repeatedly increase our prices and yet decline @90% of all claims, breaching contract. I will change the law to stop Insurance companies moving their money out of state, &/or payout their investors, then claim they need to raise their prices. We will also require them to honor their policies, not just fleece the public. If they paid their claims, they wouldn't be sued and they would be more financially solvent. There is so much more, but we need to protect our people with Medicaid for all or a state backed health system like Massachusetts while we pursue universal healthcare. Healthcare should be a service, not a profit margin. And, healthcare is a right! People should not be afraid of seeking healthcare because of the cost.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

I would write a bill to create a portal that has a direct communication link to each State's Vital Records Office where we can do an instant access request for the records needed via the internet and provide a fund for all community members to be able to get a state sanctioned ID or Driver's License. If we have the money for Alligator Alcatraz, we have the funding for ID's and Licenses. The Department of Transportation already has a portal to all 50 states to verify driver's history due to the significant military presence here, they can utilize the same system. Most people already do most of their voter registration when they get an ID, anyway, they can do the complete process there and get clearance cited as such on their DL/ ID as well as a printed and certified document saying documentation completed should they lose their license.

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

I most certainly believe in blocking the purchase of homes by commercial entities. Additionally, a pied-à-terre tax, an annual surcharge specifically targeting luxury second homes valued at \$1 million or more that are not occupied as a primary residence shall be implemented. The levy is tiered, meaning higher-value properties are taxed at increasingly progressive rates, ranging from 0.8% to 1.3%. Meanwhile, if the federal government doesn't take over Mortgages, FL state can offer mortgages and refinancing with a max interest rate of 1%, significantly lowering the cost of mortgages and rents. Or, we could require banks to offer a percentage of their bank owned homes as low-in resources or to work with Habitat for Humanity in home ownership opportunities. Easier access to 1st time home buyer's incentives that are also the same in every county, making certification in the program easier and more affordable, providing an incentive for renters to pursue the American Dream.

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

Every bit of healthcare is between a woman and her doctor. I do support abortion up to the previous standard of late term, with

the exception of death of the baby, severe defect, or the life of the woman. (Rape, incest, and any other reason is allowable as well.) Abortion is healthcare and no one has the right to keep you from healthcare, regardless of sex. If the woman's doctor says it is a necessary procedure for the health of the mother, she has full autonomy over her body.

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

For at least the past 15 years, our GOP led administrations aggressively attacked the rights of autonomy for communities and locals. They have repeatedly tried to isolate power to the State Executive to exert full control over all aspects of communities. Meanwhile, blocking their activities from the public as much as they can, until the law is already in place. We need to re-balance the power structure and allow cities and town to restore their autonomy. Communities should have the right to decide to have rainbow streets, to not have book banning/ burning, to honor their communities and strengthen the rights of their citizens. By keeping the power local, they can exert more power over their education systems, their police/ infrastructure, and the equal treatment of their employees. Fed. govt is supposed to support the state govt and state govt is supposed to support local government. Govt' is supposed to be by and for the people, not the rich only or corporations.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

Given the incredible level of healthcare providers we have available in Florida, and the incredible amount of excess funds we seem to have for unproductive measures (i.e.- Alligator Alcatraz) We should develop a healthcare system similar to Mass and Washington state. Providing an insurance system that is sliding scale based on income. And, anyone who wants to practice in FL should be required to take it. Too many practitioners are not doing their jobs because then they can bill the insurance companies for a 2nd procedure (I have 1st hand experience in this.) or they are significantly marking up their prices because insurance companies will kick back the correct billing and medical records codes 3 times before it is suddenly correct and they pay the bill. So, they can keep the money in the bank and make interest on it. If insurance companies want to operate in FL, they must participate and honor claims appropriately, not decline based on AI. But, approve needed procedures.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

I agree, wholeheartedly. First of all, we get something back on paying taxes. On the whole, the insurance companies deny @90% of legitimate claims in the hopes that they will not appeal or sue for the enforcement of the contract. They also are taking advantage of the public by creating a 'Hurricane coverage' that is 75% of the cost of your insurance and then inappropriately use the statement "wind- driven rain is not covered", when as a hurricane that is exactly what you are paying for. Thus, a breach of contract. We should never have to use an attorney to enforce our contracts. If the insurance companies paid their claims, it would cost them significantly less. And, our prices would be lower. We need to change the laws to hold them accountable &/or start our own storm fund reducing the cost of insurance policies by @75%. As a licensed insurance agent, I have seen this from both sides and am equally frustrated. This is Corporate fraud.

State Representative 57

Serves 2-year terms with a limit of 4 consecutive terms. There are 120 House members. The 2025 salary is \$29,697 plus (travel and subsistence). Only requirement is to pass a balanced state budget.



Adam Anderson

Party: Republican

Campaign Website: voteadamanderson.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/VoteAdamAnderson/

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

- candidate declined to respond -

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

- candidate declined to respond -

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

- candidate declined to respond -

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

- candidate declined to respond -

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -



Wendy C. Hoy

Party: Democratic

Age: 76

Education: University of Michigan, graduated with distinction

Hometown: Oldsmar

County: Pinellas

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What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

Florida is facing multiple challenges, but the first ones to address are rising housing and insurance costs. I support tightening insurance oversight, capping yearly rate increases, allowing roof inspections before mandatory replacement, expanding mediation, creating incentives for first time homebuyers and new rental housing, and banning rent algorithm software many large landlords use to artificially raise rents.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

If Florida requires documentary proof of citizenship to vote, I'll ensure every eligible resident can meet that requirement without cost or hardship. That means free vital records, mobile document services, safe confidential help for survivors, and multiple ways to verify citizenship—like passport cards, USCIS or SSA verification, military records, or digital state-held birth records. No Floridian should lose their vote because they lack a document the state made hard to obtain.

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

Florida's lack of affordable housing hurts families and the economy. Beyond tax and insurance reforms, I support expanding state housing funds, modernizing zoning, and streamlining permits while still requiring full environmental review. I also back renter safeguards, down payment and home repair aid, and better transportation options including local shuttles so commuting isn't an added burden.

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

I support full, unrestricted access to safe and legal abortion because bodily autonomy is essential to equality. People must be able to make their own reproductive decisions without government interference. I support access including cases of rape or incest, threats to a person's long term mental or physical health, or severe fetal abnormalities. I support strong federal protections to ensure abortion access nationwide and to safeguard personal freedom.

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

Florida's balance between state preemption and local home rule has shifted heavily toward Tallahassee, limiting cities and counties from addressing community specific needs. Many communities face unique challenges—housing, land use, environmental protection—that require local flexibility. Broad preemptions often block innovation and weaken accountability. A better balance would use narrower preemptions, require review before overriding local authority, and clearly define areas where local governments should lead.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

Florida should accept Medicaid expansion dollars. The federal government covers 90% of expansion costs, bringing billions back to the state. These funds can support primary and preventive care, behavioral health and substance use treatment, maternal health, and home and community-based services. Expansion also reduces uncompensated care for hospitals, strengthens rural facilities, and closes the coverage gap for low-income adults. It's a fiscally responsible way to improve access and stabilize our healthcare system.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

Florida homeowners have seen insurance premiums rise far faster than property taxes. Insurance costs have doubled for many families since 2021, with some facing 40–80% jumps in a single year. These increases are unpredictable and often caused by insurers leaving the state or dropping coverage. Property taxes rise more gradually, usually in single digit or low double-digit percentages. Because insurance spikes are sudden and can add thousands at once, homeowners see it as the more urgent crisis, and I agree with that assessment.

State Representative 58

Serves 2-year terms with a limit of 4 consecutive terms. There are 120 House members. The 2025 salary is \$29,697 plus (travel and subsistence). Only requirement is to pass a balanced state budget.



Bryan Michael Beckman

Party: Democratic

Age: 62

Education: Western Michigan University, BS Mathematics, Computer Science

Hometown: Clearwater

County: Pinellas

Campaign Website: www.bryanbeckmanfl.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560084776410

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What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

Florida's two greatest challenges are affordability and protecting our quality of life. Families face rising insurance, housing, utility, healthcare and childcare costs while growth strains our infrastructure and environment. In my first six months, I will pursue insurance reform, Medicaid expansion, affordable housing and stronger public education. My Energy Freedom Plan will lower utility costs through community solar, plug-in solar and power purchase agreements, protect net metering, and fight unfair nuclear charges. I will also work to protect our water and beaches, strengthen resiliency, and ensure data centers pay their full costs rather than shifting them to residents. Florida can grow without making life unaffordable for the people who call it home.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

Voting is a fundamental right, and government should never create harmful barriers to exercising it. If citizenship documentation is required, Florida must provide a simple, free process to obtain necessary birth, marriage or other records, including assistance for people whose names have changed. I would fight any system that effectively becomes a poll tax. Eligible citizens should be encouraged to participate in our democracy—not discouraged by unnecessary bureaucracy or expense.

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

Florida must increase housing supply while ensuring working families, seniors and young people can afford it. The Florida Housing Coalition reports that more than \$2.2 billion was diverted from the Sadowski Housing Trust Funds from 2001–2021, leaving more than 166,000 affordable housing units unassisted. I support fully funding SHIP and SAIL, preserving affordable units, expanding homebuyer assistance, and partnering with nonprofits and local governments on workforce housing. My Energy Freedom Plan will help lower-income families, especially renters, save on utility bills through community solar and other affordable clean-energy options. Tallahassee should provide resources and incentives—not impose one-size-fits-all mandates that override thoughtful local planning.

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

I support access to safe, legal abortion and believe decisions about pregnancy belong to a woman in consultation with her medical provider—not politicians in Tallahassee. Florida's six-week abortion ban is highly restrictive and takes effect before many women even know they are pregnant. Government should not interfere in these deeply personal, private medical decisions. I trust women, families and their doctors to make decisions based on their individual circumstances, health and medical needs.

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

Florida has gone too far in preempting local government. Our cities are extraordinarily diverse, and what works in Miami, Clearwater or rural Florida may be completely different. My wife, Kathleen, served four years on the Clearwater City Council and as Vice President of the Suncoast League of Cities, advocating in Tallahassee for home rule. I saw firsthand how state preemptions and unfunded mandates can prevent local leaders from solving local problems. I will support restoring meaningful home rule and oppose unnecessary preemptions. State government should establish appropriate standards, but local elected officials—who know their communities and are directly accountable to their residents—need the flexibility to govern.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

Florida should expand Medicaid, like the majority of states in the U.S. We already send our federal tax dollars to Washington; refusing expansion means leaving healthcare dollars on the table while working Floridians fall through the cracks. ALICE families are working—often in jobs essential to our communities—but still struggle to afford housing, food, childcare and healthcare. I would support Medicaid expansion for eligible working Floridians, strengthen community health providers and protect access to preventive and primary care. Florida should also seek every available federal healthcare dollar and demand transparency and accountability in how it is spent. Providing affordable care before someone reaches a crisis is healthier for families and far less costly than relying on emergency rooms.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

Property insurance is an extremely urgent concern. Property taxes fund essential local services—police, fire, infrastructure,

parks and schools. Insurance premiums, however, have risen dramatically and can make owning a home unaffordable, particularly for seniors and working families. I will focus on lowering premiums, strengthening competition and consumer protections, expanding mitigation and resiliency programs, and holding insurers accountable. I am committed to thoughtful property tax reform in 2027. We should also be clear about the consequences of cutting property taxes without a responsible plan. Those costs will not simply disappear—they will most likely be shifted to homeowners and local governments through higher fees, reduced services, or other taxes. And when local revenue is cut, essential services such as police, fire protection, infrastructure, parks and schools are put at risk. That is not meaningful relief for families; it is merely moving the burden.



Kimberly "Kim" Berfield

Party: Republican

Campaign Website: kimberlyberfield.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BerfieldforFLHouse/

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

- candidate declined to respond -

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

- candidate declined to respond -

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

- candidate declined to respond -

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

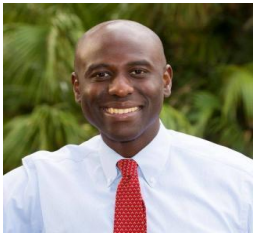
- candidate declined to respond -

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -

State Representative 59

Serves 2-year terms with a limit of 4 consecutive terms. There are 120 House members. The 2025 salary is \$29,697 plus (travel and subsistence). Only requirement is to pass a balanced state budget.



Berny Jacques

Party: Republican

Campaign Website: bernyforflorida.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BernyForFlorida

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

- candidate declined to respond -

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

- candidate declined to respond -

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

- candidate declined to respond -

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

- candidate declined to respond -

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -



Susan Rochelle Leff

Party: Democratic

Age: 63

Education: AA St Petersburg JR College Clearwater FL and BA University of South Florida Tampa FL

Hometown: Largo, FL

County: Pinellas

Campaign Website: leffforthepeople.com/

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Campaign Phone: 7272788888

Campaign Mailing Address: 3606 El Camino Ct Largo FL 33771-2779

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

Florida's two most important challenges are the rising cost of living and access to affordable healthcare. Families are struggling with skyrocketing homeowners insurance, housing, rent, groceries, utilities, and other everyday expenses. In my first six months, I will support legislation to lower insurance costs, increase accountability and transparency in the insurance industry, expand affordable housing, and provide meaningful relief for working families and seniors. Second, healthcare should be a necessity, not a luxury. No Floridian should have to choose between medicine, food, or keeping a roof over their head. I will fight to expand access to affordable healthcare, support Medicaid expansion, lower prescription drug costs, strengthen mental health services, protect reproductive healthcare, and ensure seniors and veterans receive the care they deserve. My priority will always be putting Florida's people ahead of special interests.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

The right to vote should never depend on a person's ability to pay for or navigate a complicated process to obtain government records. If documentary proof of citizenship becomes a requirement for voter registration, I will work to ensure that every eligible Floridian has a fair and affordable way to comply. This is particularly important for women whose names have changed through marriage or divorce, seniors, adopted individuals, and people who may not have easy access to birth or marriage records. I would support legislation providing free or low-cost certified birth, marriage, divorce, and name-change records when needed for voter registration. I would also work to create a streamlined process allowing election officials to verify citizenship through secure government records whenever possible, rather than placing the entire burden on the voter. Protecting election integrity and protecting an eligible citizen's right to vote should go hand in hand.

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

Florida must increase the supply of housing that working families, seniors, and young people can actually afford. I support fully funding and protecting the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Funds and directing those dollars toward their intended purpose: affordable housing. I would support incentives and partnerships with local governments and responsible developers to build more affordable and workforce housing, while ensuring new development meets the needs of existing communities. For renters, I support stronger protections against excessive fees, greater transparency in rental costs, and expanded assistance for families at risk of eviction or homelessness. I also support programs that help first-time homebuyers with down payments and closing costs and initiatives that rehabilitate existing homes. Florida's teachers, first responders, healthcare workers, veterans, seniors, and working families should be able to afford to live in the communities they serve.

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

I support access to safe, legal abortion and believe decisions about pregnancy should be made by a woman in consultation with her healthcare provider—not by politicians. I support protecting access to abortion before viability and ensuring appropriate medical care remains available when a pregnancy threatens the life or health of the patient, involves rape or incest, or involves a severe or fatal fetal condition. I also believe women experiencing miscarriage or other pregnancy complications must be able to receive timely medical treatment without doctors fearing political or criminal consequences. Every Floridian deserves the freedom, privacy, and dignity to make deeply personal healthcare decisions without government interference.

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

I believe Florida has shifted too much power away from local governments through state preemption. While standards are appropriate in some areas, local communities understand their own needs and should have the ability to address them without unnecessary interference from Tallahassee. I support restoring a stronger balance between state authority and home rule. Cities and counties should have reasonable flexibility to respond to local concerns involving affordable housing, environmental protection, public safety, transportation, development, and other community needs. I would oppose unnecessary preemption and support legislation restoring local decision-making where it has been unjustifiably restricted. State government should establish appropriate protections and standards, but it should also respect the ability of local elected officials and residents to develop solutions that work for their communities.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

Florida must take greater responsibility for ensuring that affordable healthcare remains available when federal support declines. I support expanding Medicaid in Florida, which would help provide coverage to more low-income working adults and reduce uncompensated care that strains hospitals and taxpayers. I would also support state initiatives that help families offset rising insurance premiums & prescription drug costs, strengthen community health centers, & expand access to mental health, preventive, maternal, and rural healthcare. Florida should aggressively pursue available federal matching funds and ensure healthcare dollars are spent efficiently and transparently. We must also protect seniors, children, people with disabilities, & working families from losing essential coverage as Medicaid costs increase. Healthcare is a necessity, not a luxury, and Florida should prioritize keeping people healthy rather than forcing families to choose between medical care & basic necessities.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

I agree that property insurance costs are a more urgent concern for many Floridians than property taxes. Insurance premiums have risen dramatically, threatening the ability of homeowners—especially seniors and working families—to remain in their homes. Property taxes, while also a concern, fund essential local services such as public safety and infrastructure. I support requiring insurers to justify rate increases, increasing transparency and oversight of insurer finances and affiliated companies, strengthening consumer and claims protections, and expanding programs such as My Safe Florida Home to help homeowners reduce risk and premiums. I also support ensuring that savings insurers receive from state-supported reinsurance and mitigation efforts are passed on to policyholders. Florida needs sustainable insurance reform that provides real relief while maintaining reliable coverage.

State Representative 60

Serves 2-year terms with a limit of 4 consecutive terms. There are 120 House members. The 2025 salary is \$29,697 plus (travel and subsistence). Only requirement is to pass a balanced state budget.



Lindsay Polega-Quigley

Party: Democratic

Age: 32

Education: J.D., Stetson University College of Law

Hometown: Wayland

County: Allean County

Campaign Website: lpqforfl.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/lpqforfl

Instagram: www.instagram.com/lpqforfl

Campaign Phone: 727-632-4577

Campaign Mailing Address: PO Box 7415 St. Petersburg FL 33734

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

1. The cost of living, including rising housing, grocery, utility, insurance, and childcare costs. 2. Rampant corruption. Many in our community are working harder than ever but still can't afford gas and groceries, and are struggling to stay in their homes. The cost of auto, health, and homeowners insurance has skyrocketed and continues to fail policyholders. It's left Floridians paying two mortgages, lacking transparency, stuck in litigation, and without a safe place to live after Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Insurance premiums have remained high, and special interests on all sides have left Floridians to foot the bill. When in office, I'll work to enact common-sense solutions to lower costs and allow hardworking Floridians to keep more money in their pockets.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

Non-citizen voting is illegal, and creating an additional documentary proof requirement is an unnecessary, costly burden passed on to us. Many women change their names after marriage, so their birth certificates show their maiden names while their IDs reflect their married names. Changing names and getting passports is expensive, and Floridians don't need another cost right now. It also burdens seniors and those still piecing their lives back together after losing important documents in storms. If documentary proof becomes a requirement to vote, I will continue to advocate for free and fair elections across the State and keep working for equitable access to the voting box for all qualified voters, as is our right.

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

Unlike many parts of Florida, Pinellas County has little undeveloped land left to build on. That means our housing solutions must focus on thoughtful redevelopment that makes the most of existing neighborhoods and infrastructure. We need policies that make homeownership attainable for working people while increasing the housing supply in ways that help lower rents, without sacrificing the character, safety, and quality of our communities. These projects should be attainable, resilient, and maintain the quality and character of our neighborhoods. Additionally, the Legislature should fully fund the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund at the state level, which has been 'swept' for other priorities in years past.

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

Healthcare decisions should remain between patients and their doctors, and should be made without political interference. This includes family planning decisions like IVF and access to contraception. How a family grows depends on families being able to make informed healthcare decisions with those they trust most.

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

, one-size-fits-all policies from Tallahassee silence residents and their local elected officials, stripping them of the power to make their own decisions. I will fight to preserve the balance between policy and local freedoms so that working people, small businesses, and our families can enact changes that fit their individual communities' needs.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

Your health and access to care when you need it should come before corporate profits. But healthcare costs are skyrocketing, policies are confusing, and insurance companies don't provide clear and transparent pricing; then, they deny the care you paid for. This is particularly problematic as federal insurance subsidies continue to decrease. Giving more working Floridians access to healthcare would boost productivity, lower the cost of care for those who already have insurance, and give people the peace of mind that their hard work has earned. This is why policy should be centered on transparency and accountability when issuers try to deny valid claims.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

In many cases, property insurance presents an equal or higher cost burden on Floridians. Having spent years working inside Florida's insurance and legal systems, I understand how insurers operate, where that system fails families and small businesses, and how policy can make a difference. Florida's insurance market needs transparency and accountability, including stronger oversight of claims practices. Reforms should balance people's ability to access justice in the courts with more efficient options for settling cases. Ultimately, this will reduce rates for homeowners and renters. The goal should be a system that resolves legitimate claims fairly and efficiently long before they reach a courtroom, while preserving access to justice when disputes can't be resolved. I'd also explore ways to strengthen flood insurance options as Florida's storm risks continue to grow.



Melissa Rutland

Party: Republican

Age: 47

Education: St Pete High; Flagler College -Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration; Wharton School-Women in Business Leadership Program

Hometown: St. Petersburg, FL

County: Pinellas

Campaign Website: melissarutland.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/votemelissarutland/

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Campaign Phone: 727-803-1177

Campaign Mailing Address: 9800 4th Street North St Petersburg FL 33704

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

Florida's two most urgent challenges are affordability and aging infrastructure. Families across our state are struggling to keep pace with the rising costs of housing, insurance, utilities, and everyday necessities, while flooding, stormwater systems, roads, and other critical infrastructure have not kept pace with growth. In my first six months, I will work across party lines toward making an impact on affordability, increasing housing supply, pursuing lower food costs and farmland, hold insurers accountable, expand hurricane-mitigation programs, and pursue meaningful tax relief. I will also work toward next-generation infrastructure and for Pinellas County's fair share of state infrastructure funding, prioritizing projects that improve drainage, protect drinking water, reduce flooding, and strengthen our communities against storms. With my extensive experience in real estate, I will be able to make a real impact in both issues of affordability and next-generation infrastructure.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

Only eligible United States citizens should vote, but eligible Floridians should not lose that right because records are difficult or expensive to obtain - particularly women whose names have changed through marriage or divorce. If documentary proof becomes mandatory, the state should provide a no-cost verification system, coordinate electronically with existing government records, waive document fees, and offer assistance through local election offices. Voters should also receive adequate notice and a reasonable opportunity to correct documentation problems. Election security and voter access are not competing goals; Florida can protect both.

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

As State Representative, I will work to address affordable housing on all levels of need and AMI. I recognize that the state legislation has allocated significant appropriation to housing subsidies. I support that funding while at the same time tying that money to meaningful policy changes that would create affordable housing naturally and create the most benefit for the most number of people. Florida must increase the supply of housing that working families, seniors, and young people can afford. I support encouraging public-private partnerships, streamlining unnecessarily lengthy approval processes, reforming permitting and supporting responsible infill development near jobs and transportation. We should also expand down-payment assistance, preserve existing housing, and encourage housing options for seniors and essential workers. With decades of experience in

commercial real estate, I understand how to bring the public and private sectors together to turn good plans into new homes.

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

I support Florida law as it currently stands, including its existing exceptions to save the life of the mother or prevent a serious and irreversible physical injury, as well as exceptions involving fatal fetal abnormalities, rape, incest, and human trafficking. These deeply personal and often heartbreaking circumstances should be approached with compassion. The law must also be clear enough that physicians can provide necessary emergency care without dangerous delays or uncertainty.

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

The state has a legitimate role in matters requiring consistent standards, but Florida's communities are diverse and many decisions are best made locally. The balance has shifted too far toward broad state preemption in some areas. Before overriding local authority, the Legislature should identify a clear need, consider the financial and practical effects on communities, and tailor the law as narrowly as possible. As a general principle, decisions about local growth, infrastructure, public safety, and quality of life should remain closest to the people they affect.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

Florida should protect healthcare access while being responsible with taxpayer dollars. I support pursuing federal flexibility through Florida-specific waivers, protecting Medicaid services for children, pregnant women, seniors, and people with disabilities, and ensuring that eligible residents do not lose coverage because of confusing paperwork. We should expand community health centers, telehealth, preventive care, and workforce programs that bring more doctors and nurses to underserved communities. Florida should also demand transparency from insurers, hospitals, and pharmacy benefit managers so that public funding reaches patients and providers rather than being lost to unnecessary administrative costs.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

I agree that property insurance is the more immediate crisis for many Floridians. A homeowner may be able to plan for gradual tax changes, but an insurance premium can increase by thousands of dollars at renewal - or coverage may disappear altogether. That affects mortgage payments, rents, home sales, and the ability of families and seniors to remain in their homes. High insurance rates is also a factor that is driving up the cost of building new housing and apartments. Florida must hold insurers accountable, improve transparency in rate-setting and claims handling, crack down on fraud, expand home-hardening assistance, and attract responsible competition. Property-tax relief remains important, but it cannot substitute for a stable and affordable insurance market.

State Representative 61

Serves 2-year terms with a limit of 4 consecutive terms. There are 120 House members. The 2025 salary is \$29,697 plus (travel and subsistence). Only requirement is to pass a balanced state budget.



Linda Chaney

Party: Republican

Campaign Website: lindachaney.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/LindaChaneyFL

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

- candidate declined to respond -

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

- candidate declined to respond -

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

- candidate declined to respond -

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

- candidate declined to respond -

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

- candidate declined to respond -

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies. At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

- candidate declined to respond -

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

- candidate declined to respond -



May Thach

Party: Democratic

Age: 34

Education: Dual B.A. Psychology/Criminology and M.A. International Affairs - International Development/Non-profit Management

Hometown: St. Petersburg

County: Pinellas

Campaign Website: www.maythach.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/may4pinellas/

Instagram: www.instagram.com/mayforpinellas

Campaign Phone: 7273284736

Campaign Mailing Address: 3615 49th Street North #128 Saint Petersburg FL 33710

What are the two most important challenges facing Florida and, if elected, what actions will you take to address them within your first six months in office?

The high cost of living for working families, young people, and seniors is a huge challenge right now. I support raising the minimum wage to at least \$20 an hour to keep up with the rising cost of living, tax reforms to close corporate tax loopholes so they can pay their fair share in taxes and increase incentives and support for businesses that invest in the local community and long-term employment opportunities in the district. Property insurance is a crisis in our state, I would support capping insurance rate hikes, tax insurance companies on their excess profits and return them to policyholders, and expansion of our state-backed universal windstorm coverage so all homeowners have a base protection.

If documentary proof of US citizenship becomes necessary in order to register to vote, how would you help those Floridians, especially women, who no longer have or don't have easy and affordable access to documents to prove citizenship, such as certified birth and marriage certificates?

I would work with local nonprofits, mutual aid groups, and our state resources to host Citizenship drives to help citizens get their documents. I would work with my fellow legislators to see how we can repeal this while working to add exemptions so the barrier to registering is reduced.

Insufficient affordable housing is hurting Florida families and limiting Florida's economy. What state measures do you support to address the affordable housing crisis, beyond tax and insurance reform, for both homeowners and renters?

I would invest in funding to support housing grants to help first-time buyers with their closing costs and fees associated with homebuying. I would support a tenants' bill of rights to ensure renters are fairly treated and have protections against corporate landlords. I would put a stop to back-end deals given to greedy developers who are inflating home prices.

Under what circumstances would you support access to abortion?

I believe in full access to reproductive healthcare services for everyone. Abortion is a healthcare decision between the patient and their healthcare provider. I trust doctors who have taken the Hippocratic Oath to act in the best interest of their patients. It should not be up to politicians to make that decision on the dais, or lawyers in the courtroom. Our current 6-weeks abortion ban have dangerous consequences where pregnant people have had to wait till they are on the brink of death before lawyers, not doctors, would allow them to be treated. Every pregnancy is complicated and different; patients should have the freedom to decide for themselves on how they navigate this personal and private decision.

With respect to preemption and home rule, is the relationship and balance of power between state and local governments in Florida appropriately addressing local issues or how should it be redefined?

There is an imbalance of power between the state and local government in respect to preemption and home rule. There has been a consolidation of power to the state government where local governments are no longer able to make decisions to address the needs of the local issues in their city. Repealing of SB 2-C, the law requiring county detention facilities to sign partnership agreements with ICE, known as 287 (g) agreement. This has put a safety risk within the local government to support their community members as the mandated increase of surveillance and policing have discriminated against our immigrant community, and stoked fear in the community as a whole, regardless of documentation as people are afraid of being targeted. Repealing of HB 1417, legislation preempting local tenant protection ordinances throughout the state. This law supersedes all local regulations on residential tenancies and rental agreements making it harder for renters to bring claims against corporate landlords.

Equitable and affordable access to healthcare is declining, in part due to the decrease of federal insurance subsidies.

At the same time, more Medicaid costs are being pushed onto the states. How should the state address these issues?

The state can expand Medicaid, expansion will bring federal tax dollars back to our state which can create new jobs for the industry. It will reduce the healthcare deserts we have throughout the state, keep rural and community hospitals open, and reduce uncompensated care hospitals must bear when an uninsured person uses the emergency room. Increased access to healthcare coverage increases a person's wellbeing and lower mortality rates. Our legislature can hold healthcare insurance corporations accountable by requiring policies to be clear with transparent pricing, reasons for denial of claims, and a capped on rates hike each year.

Polls indicate the public is more concerned about the cost of property insurance than property taxes. What is your view and why?

I agree, property insurance has skyrocketed over the past decade when coverage and claims have been denied more frequently. Private insurance corporations are price-gouging families, seniors, veterans, and renters for their corporate greed. People can't afford to pay for their insurance and when they do pay and get denied coverage, it does not make sense to be insured, so more people since the hurricanes in 2024 have gone uninsured. It is why I support expanding our state-backed

universal windstorm coverage to increase access for residents. Our district is prone to natural disasters so having access to guarantee windstorm coverage would lower current insurance rates as the risk is shared between the state and the insurance companies. This will reduce the ability for private insurance corporations to provide predatory policies which deny legitimate claims after hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Justice Carlos G. Muniz, FL Supreme Court Justice - Merit Retention

FL Supreme Court Justices decide death penalty appeals and appeals from decisions of the appellate courts; resolve conflicts among appellate courts; and oversee the administration of Florida's court system.

Term: 6 Years **Salary:** \$251,414

Justice Carlos G. Muniz is the 89th Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, appointed to the Florida Supreme Court by Governor Ron DeSantis on January 22, 2019. Prior to joining the Court, he served on the staff of Secretary Betsy DeVos as the presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed general counsel of the United States Department of Education. He served as the deputy attorney general and chief of staff to Attorney General Pam Bondi; as deputy chief of staff and counsel in the Office of the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives; as general counsel of the Department of Financial Services; and as deputy general counsel to Governor Jeb Bush. Justice Muñoz is a graduate of the University of Virginia and of Yale Law School. After law school, he clerked for Judge José A. Cabranes of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and for Judge Thomas A. Flannery of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Click here to go: [Chief Justice Carlos G. Muñoz / Justices / About the Court / The Court - - Florida Supreme Court](#)

Click here to view recent Supreme Court Opinions: [Opinion Search For All Appellate Courts - Supreme Court \(flcourts.gov\)](#)

Judge J. Andrew Atkinson, FL 2nd District Court of Appeal-Retention

The purpose of Florida's District Courts of Appeal is to provide the opportunity for thoughtful review of decisions of lower tribunals by multi-judge panels. District Courts of Appeal correct harmful errors and ensure that decisions are consistent with our rights and liberties. This process contributes to the development, clarity, and consistency of the law.

Term: 6 Years **Salary:** \$212,562

Legal Offices & Positions: J. Andrew "Drew" Atkinson received a B.A. from Florida State University and a J.D. with honors from Nova Southeastern University. He began his legal career at the Florida Office of the Attorney General, working in the Criminal Appeals Division before serving as a Deputy Solicitor General. After clerking for the Honorable Melanie G. May of the Fourth District Court of Appeal, he served as Assistant General Counsel to the Governor before entering private practice at a law firm. He later served as General Counsel for both the Florida Department of State and the Florida Department of Management Services. He was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal in 2018. Judge Atkinson is a veteran of the United States Army. He was born in Gainesville and raised in Bradenton, where he graduated from Manatee High School.

Click here to go: <https://2dca.flcourts.gov/Judges/judge-j.-andrew-atkinson>

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Judge Morris Silberman, FL 2nd District Court of Appeal-Retention

The purpose of Florida's District Courts of Appeal is to provide the opportunity for thoughtful review of decisions of lower tribunals by multi-judge panels. District Courts of Appeal correct harmful errors and ensure that decisions are consistent with our rights and liberties. This process contributes to the development, clarity, and consistency of the law.

Term: 6 Years **Salary:** \$212,562

Legal Offices & Positions: Judge Silberman received his undergraduate degree from Tulane University, majoring in philosophy and political science. He received his J.D. degree from the University of Florida College of Law in 1982. He served as a law clerk to Judge Herboth S. Ryder at the Second District Court of Appeal. He then worked with law firms in Sarasota and Clearwater. In 1988, he formed his own firm in Clearwater. Judge Silberman was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal in January 2001. He served as Chief Judge of the court from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2013. He has been active in a variety of professional and legal organizations. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Center for State Courts and serves on the Finance Committee and the Public Affairs Committee. He served as President of the Council of Chief Judges of the State Courts of Appeal from October 2021 to December 2022, and previously served as Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Chairperson of various Council committees. He is an Emeritus Trustee of the University of Florida Law Center Association Board of Trustees and serves on the Executive Council of The Florida Bar Appellate Practice Section. Judge Silberman is a past Chairman of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission and was a member of the JQC from 2003 to 2012. He was a member of The Florida Bar Board of Governors from 1996 to 2000, served two terms on the Executive Committee and chaired the Budget Committee, the Election Reform Special Committee, and other committees. He was President of the Clearwater Bar Association from 1993 to 1994. He is a past member of the Bruce R. Jacob-Chris W. Altenbernd Criminal Appellate American Inn of Court and the Barney Masterson Inn of Court.

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Judge Daniel H. Sleet, FL 2nd District Court of Appeal-Retention

The purpose of Florida's District Courts of Appeal is to provide the opportunity for thoughtful review of decisions of lower tribunals by multi-judge panels. District Courts of Appeal correct harmful errors and ensure that decisions are consistent with our rights and liberties. This process contributes to the development, clarity, and consistency of the law.

Term: 6 Years **Salary:** \$212,562

Legal Offices & Positions: Judge Sleet earned a B.A. degree in History from Furman University in 1984. He received his J.D. degree from Cumberland School of Law in 1987. Judge Sleet served as an assistant state attorney for the Hillsborough County State Attorney's Office from 1987-1991. In 1991, Judge Sleet joined the Tampa law firm of Barr, Murman, & Tonelli as an associate attorney practicing in the area of personal injury defense. He was certified by the Florida Supreme Court as a mediator. In 2005, Governor Bush appointed Judge Sleet to the 13th Judicial Circuit Court. He was reelected to the circuit court without opposition in 2008 and served until December 2012 when Governor Rick Scott appointed him to the Second District Court. Judge Sleet is the chair of the Legislative Committee of the Second District Court. Judge Sleet is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) and served as president of the Tampa Bay Chapter in 2017. Judge Sleet has been an Adjunct Professor of Trial Advocacy at the University of Tampa since 2016.

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Judge Andrea Teves Smith, FL 2nd District Court of Appeal-Retention

The purpose of Florida's District Courts of Appeal is to provide the opportunity for thoughtful review of decisions of lower tribunals by multi-judge panels. District Courts of Appeal correct harmful errors and ensure that decisions are consistent with our rights and liberties. This process contributes to the development, clarity, and consistency of the law.

Term: 6 Years **Salary:** \$212,562

Legal Offices & Positions: Judge Smith graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. She earned her J.D. from Stetson University College of Law. She began her law career with the firm of Peterson & Myers, P.A. in Lakeland, Florida. In 2013, Judge Smith was appointed to the circuit bench of the Tenth Judicial Circuit, where she served for five years in the civil, family, and felony divisions. She served as the Administrative Judge for the Civil Division and as the Second District Court of Appeal Representative for the Florida Conference of Circuit Judges. She was retained by election in 2014. Judge Smith served on the advisory board of the Academy of Legal Studies at George Jenkins High School. She was also a member of the Lakeland Bar Association, Polk Association of Women Lawyers, and the Willson American Inn of Court. On January 7, 2019, Judge Smith was appointed to the Second District Court of Appeal and began serving as a member of the court on February 1, 2019. Also in 2019, she was awarded the fairness and diversity award by the Tenth Judicial Circuit's Fairness & Diversity Committee. Judge Smith served as chair and vice chair on the Florida Supreme Court Standing Committee on Fairness & Diversity, as President of the Willson American Inn of Court, and as a member of the Florida Supreme Court's Workgroup on Sanctions for Vexatious and Sham Litigation.

Click here to go: [Judge Andrea Teves Smith / Judges - - Second District Court of Appeal](#)

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State Constitutional Amendments:

Florida Amendment 1- Budget Stabilization Fund

Ballot Language:

Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to increase the amount of funds that may be retained in the budget stabilization fund from 10% to 25% of general revenue collections, require the legislature to transfer the lesser of \$750 million or the amount required to reach 25% of the general revenue collections each year unless certain conditions are met, and allow the legislature to withdraw funds for critical state needs.

Synopsis:

This amendment is proposed by the Florida State Legislature. It will amend Article III, Section 19. The term "revenue collections" refers to the last completed fiscal year's net revenue collections for the general revenue fund.

This proposed amendment passed the House 100-1 and the Senate 29-4

Budget stabilization funds (BSF) are a form of savings account where states can place revenue, such as tax receipts, that will be used to finance unexpected budget deficits or emergencies. All 50 states have some form of a budget stabilization fund. The Florida BSF was created in 1992 after 83% of voters approved the Constitutional Amendment. The constitution requires that the balance of the Florida BSF not fall below 5% of revenue collections. The maximum balance allowed for the Florida BSF is 10% of the revenue collections. For example, for fiscal year 2024-2025, the amount in the BSF was 9.3% of the state's revenue collections. The last time that Florida withdrew more money from the BSF than it deposited was in 2008 during the Great Recession.

This proposed amendment would increase the maximum amount of funds that can be retained in the Florida BSF, changing the limit to 25% of annual revenue collections. The legislature would also be required to transfer funds into the BSF each year. The amount transferred would be either \$750 million, or however much is needed to bring the fund up to the 25% limit, whichever is less.

Under this amendment, funds could only be withdrawn from the BSF under three conditions:

1. The legislature passes a bill to withdraw funds to pay the expenses associated with an emergency.
2. The legislature passes a bill to withdraw funds to cover a shortfall in revenue, such as less than anticipated sales tax receipts.
3. The legislature determines there is a nonrecurring critical state need, the principal balance of the BSF is greater than 15% of state revenue collections, and two-thirds of the legislature approves the withdrawal of funds.

This amendment would also allow the legislature to suspend the annual revenue transfer to the fund under either of the following circumstances:

1. No more than once every five years, the legislature determines that there is a critical state need that requires funding in an amount exceeding what would have been transferred into the BSF, and two-thirds of the legislature approves the suspension of the transfer.
2. The legislature withdraws funds from the BSF during the same fiscal year for an emergency or revenue shortfall.

The fiscal impact on the state is indeterminate, but likely insignificant.

Opponents: Florida Education Association, LWV of Florida

Supporters: Florida Legislature (House 100-1, Senate 29-4)

A Yes Vote Would increase the amount of funds held in the Budget Stabilization Fund from 10% to 25% of revenue collections. Require an annual transfer to the fund equal to \$750 million or 25% of the revenue collections (whichever is lesser). Define how money can be withdrawn from the fund. Allow the legislature to suspend the transfer under certain conditions.

A No Vote Would keep the maximum allowable amount of funds in the Budget Stabilization Fund at 10% of revenue collections.

Florida Amendment 2- Exemption of Tangible Personal Property on Agricultural Land from Taxation

Ballot Language:

Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to exempt tangible personal property habitually located or typically present on land classified as agricultural, used in the production of agricultural products or for agritourism activities, and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the agricultural land from ad valorem taxation. If approved this amendment would first apply for tax years beginning January 1, 2027.

Synopsis:

This amendment is proposed by the Florida State Legislature. It will amend Article VII, Section 3. It passed the House 110-1 and the Senate 37-0.

This proposed amendment would exempt the value of certain tangible personal property (such as farm equipment or tools) used in agriculture or agritourism from ad valorem property taxes, if the property:

1. is habitually located or typically present on agricultural land.
2. is used for producing agricultural products or for agritourism and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the agricultural land.

Tangible personal property (TPP) refers to physical, movable assets such as furniture, machinery, tools, and equipment. Businesses pay property taxes on equipment used in the business, except for certain exempt categories - including motor vehicles, household goods, and the first \$25,000 of TPP value for each taxpayer.

The Florida Legislature's Bill Analysis & Fiscal Impact Statement states that the Revenue Estimating Conference estimated this amendment, if approved by voters, will have a negative recurring impact on local government revenues of \$31 million, beginning in Fiscal Year 2027-28.

Opponents: Florida Education Association, LWV of Florida

Supporters: Florida Legislature (House 110-1, Senate 37-0)

A Yes Vote Would exclude tangible personal property, such as farm equipment or tools, from the calculation of property taxes if the property is typically present on agricultural land, used for farming or agritourism activities, and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the land.

A No Vote Would continue to include tangible personal property, such as farm equipment or tools, in the calculation of property taxes if the property is typically present on agricultural land, used for farming or agritourism activities, and owned by the landowner or leaseholder of the land.

Florida Amendment 3- Increased Homestead Exemption; Lower Cap on Increases in Non-Homestead Property Assessments

Ballot Language:

This amendment increases the homestead exemption, for all non-school taxes, to \$150,000 in 2027 and \$250,000 in 2028, and adjusts for inflation thereafter. It requires the Legislature to prescribe a uniform procedure for counties and municipalities, for their respective levies, to increase the homestead exemption up to full assessed value, and allows special districts, subject to referendum approval, to do the same. Persons who are not Florida residents on December 31, 2026, will receive the existing homestead exemption upon qualifying for a homestead exemption, with the increased homestead exemption beginning with the fifth year of exemption, to the extent permitted by the U.S. Constitution. This amendment reduces the annual cap on assessment increases for non-homestead properties from 10% to 5%. This amendment requires counties and municipalities to use property taxes solely for public safety, education and schools, infrastructure, natural resources, bond debt service, retirement benefits for employees, and operations and administration. Other expenditures may be approved by county officers or county or municipal governing bodies unless prohibited by general law, notwithstanding Article VII, Section 9(a) of the Florida Constitution, which allows counties and municipalities to levy property taxes for their respective purposes. This amendment takes effect January 1, 2027.

Synopsis:

This amendment is proposed by the Florida State Legislature. This amendment passed 75-27 in the House (16 not voting) and 30-8 in the Senate (2 not voting).

This amendment would revise Article VII Sections 4, 6, and 9 and create new Article XII - Save Our Homes From Excessive Property Taxes. If passed, it would become effective January 1, 2027.

Ad valorem and Non-ad valorem Taxes: Tax bills have ad valorem taxes, which are based on a property's assessed value. These are referred to as "property taxes." Tax bills also have non-ad valorem taxes, which are flat fees that are collected to pay for specific local services or infrastructure improvements. This amendment only alters ad valorem taxes.

Millage Rates: The Florida Constitution caps property tax millage rates for local governments at 10 mills. One mill equals \$1 of tax for every \$1,000 of assessed property value. So a rate of one mill on a \$200,000 house equals \$200. Examples of current rates in Florida municipalities:

- City of Miami: 7.5539 mills
- City of Tampa: 6.2076 mills
- City of Orlando: 6.6500 mills

“Permanent residence” is defined as the place a person considers their permanent home to which, whenever absent, they will return.

For homeowners who permanently reside on their property (house or condominium), there is a portion of the home’s assessed value that is not subject to ad valorem taxes or “property taxes.” This is known as the “homestead exemption.” Currently, the first \$25,000 of assessed value is exempt from **all** property taxes, including those levied by school districts. An additional \$25,000 of assessed value is exempt from all property taxes except those levied by school districts. This additional \$25,000 exemption applies to the assessed value of homestead property valued between \$50,000 and \$75,000.

The bill passed by the Legislature ([CS/HJR 1F](#)) is summarized below.

- For homeowners with homesteaded property established by December 31, 2026, the homestead exemption for all property taxes, except those levied by school districts, would increase to:
 - up to \$150,000 of the assessed value beginning on January 1, 2027.
 - up to \$250,000 of the assessed value beginning on January 1, 2028.
- Homesteads established on or after January 1, 2027 are only eligible for these changes after establishing residency status for five years. After the fifth year, these homesteads are eligible for the maximum \$250,000 exemption.
- For homeowners with less than 5 years of homestead exemption, up to \$25,000 of assessed value is exempt from all property taxes and an additional \$25,000 is exempt from all property taxes, except non-school tax levies.
- The new exemption values will be adjusted annually for positive inflation growth beginning January 1, 2028.
- For non-homestead residential property (own home, but not permanent resident) and non-residential property, the maximum increase in annual property assessment used to determine property taxes is reduced from 10% to 5%, beginning January 1, 2027.
- Requires the legislature, through general law, to establish a procedure for counties and municipalities to schedule for further exemption of property taxes on all homestead property up to remaining assessed value, if a county or municipality chooses to do so.
- Property tax levied by counties and municipalities is limited to only cover expenditures to:
 - Provide for public safety, including law enforcement, fire service, and emergency medical service;
 - Provide funding for education and public schools;
 - Finance or refinance infrastructure, including expenditures on road and bridge construction and maintenance and stormwater control;
 - Finance or refinance natural resource projects, including flood control measures;
 - Issue local bonds for uses consistent with the approved used above and to make debt service payments for existing obligations;
 - Meet obligations for retirement benefits of local government employees;
 - Fund the operations and administration of county officers and commissioners established under Article VIII of the Florida Constitution and municipalities, and the expenditures approved by such county officers or county or municipal governing bodies, except those expenditures prohibited by general law.

A Balancing Act

Permanent residents with homestead property will receive significant property tax relief due to a permanent increase in the homestead property exemption amount. By January 1, 2028, a home valued at \$250,000 or less will pay no ad valorem property taxes, except for those taxes levied by school districts. Owners of non-homesteaded property will also receive a property tax break because the amount their property assessment can increase each year is reduced from 10% to 5%, which reduces their property taxes..

However, this means that local governments, county and municipalities, will receive significantly less revenue to fund government services that these same residents use. Since this amendment also dictates how property taxes are spent by counties and municipalities, local governments are further constrained in how they manage their budgets.

The Revenue Estimating Conference analysis (under the Florida Legislature) dated June 12, 2026 states local governments could expect **nearly \$5 billion less revenue in 2027-2028. That number is estimated to increase to \$8.8 billion in 2028-2029, \$9.7 billion in 2029-2030, \$10.7 billion in 2030-2031 and \$11.9 in 2031-2032** . These values do not take into consideration the total loss in revenue if a county or municipality reduces property tax exemptions for homestead property even further.

Impact of the increased property tax exemptions:

- Moody's, Fitch and S&P Global Ratings all expect greater credit pressure for local governments if voters approve the proposed property tax amendment.
- The amendment would significantly decrease future revenue collection by counties and municipalities, which would constrain overall growth of local government.
- The original proposed trust fund was eliminated from the final legislation, leaving no safety net for the 29 fiscally constrained counties or lapsed critical services. [FL Dept of Revenue's List of Fiscally Constrained Counties](#)
- Adversely impacts counties, municipalities, and special districts like Children’s Services Councils, Hospital Districts, Mosquito Control Districts and Water Management Districts.

- Services like public parks, public transportation, recreation centers, health services, public landscaping, environmental resources would lose millions of dollars needed to provide those services. This will force municipalities to either cut services or monetize services such as increase parking rates and charge entrance fees for parks & recreation centers.
- Public libraries are funded primarily through local property taxes and serve more than 23 million Floridians through 541 library locations, 22 bookmobiles, millions of annual visits, workforce development programs, digital access services, literacy initiatives, and educational programming.

Shifting How Tax Revenue May Be Collected:

The revenue loss would have to be offset by increasing taxes and fees and/or making budget cuts, effectively leading to a cost shift as Floridians either pay more in other ways or lose vital public services.

- **Increase Property Taxes:** Local governments can still make up the revenue shortfall by increasing property taxes on homestead and non-homestead properties. Because apartment buildings and rental houses fall into the category of non-homestead properties, landlords are likely to pass these added costs onto tenants in the form of higher rent. Commercial property owners will have higher overheads costs for their businesses.
- **Non-ad valorem Taxes:** These taxes are not tied to property values, which means they are not affected by this amendment. Counties and cities could make up the loss in funds resulting from higher homestead exemptions by relying more heavily on these revenue sources, which can include local sales taxes, motor fuel taxes, tourist development taxes and utility taxes (water, sewage, garbage). Additionally, local governments could pass ordinances to increase or create new fees to raise money. For example, fire protection services currently paid for by property taxes could be shifted to a fee-based system.
- **Special Assessments:** Homeowners may still receive a property tax bill to pay for special assessments, which may now occur more often. Assessments are one time fees issued to cover unexpected expenses or major projects.
- **Impact Fees:** Impact fees are charged to new real estate developments to cover the cost of expanding public infrastructure (such as schools, roads, and emergency services). Cities and counties facing constrained property tax budgets will likely look to maximize or restructure their impact fee schedules to shift the financial burden of new growth onto developers.
- **Monetizing City Assets** (naming rights, billboards or advertising) may be another way counties and municipalities could raise revenue to cover the shortfall due to decreased property tax revenue.

Click here to view the City-level impact statement issued by the Florida League of Cities: [City-Level Impact Statement](#)

Click here to view the County-level impact statement issued by the Florida Association of Counties: [County-Level Impact Statement](#)

Opponents: Florida Tax Watch, Florida Policy Institute, Florida for All, Florida PTA, Florida State Director of MomsRising/MamásConPoder, Southern Poverty Law Center, Florida League of Cities, Florida Association of Counties, Florida Rising, Florida Education Association, Pastors for Florida's Children, SEIU Florida State Council/SEIU 1991, The Tax Foundation, Florida Student Power, Editorial Boards of the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Miami Herald, Orlando Sentinel, Palm Beach Post and Sun-Sentinel, Vote No On 3, 3rd Degrees Florida, Floridians for Shared Prosperity, League of Women Voters of Florida, Florida Professional Firefighters, Florida Fraternal Order of Police, Florida Fire Chiefs Association, Florida Festivals and Events Association, Catalyst Miami, Community Spring, EduVoter Action Network, Equal Ground Education Fund, Families for Strong Public Schools & Voters for Strong Public Schools, Florida AFL-CIO, Florida Voices for Health, NAACP FL State Conference, Progress Florida, UnidosUS, 1,000 Friends of Florida, FL Rural Economic Development Assoc. FL chapter of the American Planning Association, Florida Engineering Society, American Council of Engineering Companies of Florida, Florida Association of County Engineers & Road Superintendents, Florida Fire Marshals & Inspectors Association, Florida Library Assoc., Florida Assoc. of Special Districts

Supporters: Florida Realtors Board of Directors, Florida Legislature (75-27 House, with 16 not voting); 30-8 Senate, with 2 not voting).

A Yes Vote Would increase the current homestead property exemption from \$50,000 to \$150,000 effective January 1, 2027, and then increase to \$250,000 effective January 1, 2028. Lower the annual cap increase on non-homestead property from 10% to 5%. Allow the legislature to dictate how counties and municipalities expend tax revenue.

A No Vote Would keep the current property tax structure in place.

City of St. Petersburg Charter Amendments & Referendums:

St Petersburg Charter Amendment #1 - Removing City-Owned Vacant Lots from Park and Waterfront Map to Create Housing

Ballot Language:

The City Charter Park and Waterfront Map contains a composite parcel identified as “Jamestown” composed of: Unity Park, recreational open space within Jamestown apartments, and nine City-owned lots in the adjacent neighborhood that are vacant and closed to the public. Shall the City Charter be amended to remove those nine vacant lots from the Map to allow subsequent/separate land use changes and potential sale of those lots for affordable or workforce housing?

Synopsis:

The City Charter Park and Waterfront Map is a legally binding document that is utilized to officially designate and protect the city's parks and waterfront property. It defines which city-owned lands cannot be sold or used for commercial development without public approval via a citywide referendum, such as this one.

The purpose of this referendum is to remove nine city-owned vacant lots from the City Charter Park and Waterfront Map so other uses can be pursued. The goal is to allow these lots to potentially be redeveloped for affordable or workforce housing, rather than remain classified as park land.

The lots are adjacent to the Jamestown Apartments and Townhomes and Unity Park in St. Petersburg. Unity Park is located at 4th Ave N and 12th Ln N. The lots have been vacant for over 40 years, are not open to the public, and are maintained only to meet minimum city code standards.

Four parcels (about 5,000 sq ft each) could be used for single-family homes; five larger parcels (10,000–13,000 sq ft each) could support multi-family housing. If zoning and land use designations are updated, up to 41 housing units could be created (4 single-family, 37 multi-family).

If the referendum passes, the city can proceed to rezone and potentially sell the lots for affordable housing projects, directly addressing local housing needs.

A Yes vote would allow the currently vacant lots to be rezoned and sold for affordable housing projects.

A No vote would leave the lots as owned by the City and designated as “park land”.

St Petersburg Charter Amendment #2 - Authorizing a 25-year lease limitation for the Port of St. Petersburg

Ballot Language:

The City Charter currently limits leases at the Port of St. Petersburg to 10 years without approval by citywide referendum. Shall the Charter be amended to increase that limitation to 25 years? That amendment would make the Port consistent with the adjacent Albert Whitted Airport and give the City additional flexibility to enter into agreements with private entities to redevelop Port facilities. That amendment would not change the permitted use of the Port.

Synopsis:

The purpose of this referendum is to increase the maximum lease term for the Port of St. Petersburg from 10 years to 25 years. The change aims to align the Port's lease terms with those of the adjacent Albert Whitted Airport, which already allows 25-year leases.

In 1984, a citywide referendum established protections and lease limitations for city-owned park and waterfront properties, including the Port. The Port is a city-owned, multi-use facility adjacent to Albert Whitted Airport. The Port has a 1,200-linear-foot wharf and approximately 4.4 acres of adjacent property occupied by a variety of government, institutional, and academic organizations engaged in maritime research.

Increasing the lease term is expected to facilitate redevelopment projects and provide flexibility for agreements with private entities such as for construction of the proposed Hub Expansion and Port Redevelopment Projects. The referendum does not alter the permitted uses of the Port, only the lease duration.

A Yes vote would increase the maximum lease term for the Port of St. Petersburg from 10 to 25 years, aligning the lease term with the adjacent Albert Whitted Airport.

A No vote would leave the current maximum lease term for the Port of St. Petersburg at 10 years.

St Petersburg Charter Amendment #3 - Technical, Clarifying, and Conforming Changes to Effectuate Holding Municipal Elections In Even-Numbered Years

Ballot Language:

In 2022, voters in a citywide referendum approved an amendment of the City Charter to reschedule elections for Mayor and Council Members to even-numbered years so that City elections would align with national and state elections beginning in 2024. Shall the Charter be amended to make technical, clarifying, and conforming changes necessary and appropriate to fully effectuate the intent of the 2022 referendum, including alignment of the Charter-review process with the current election schedule?

Synopsis:

This referendum updates the City Charter to clarify that municipal primary and general elections will now occur on the same dates as state primary and general elections. If the state returns to a two-primary system, the municipal primary will align with the first state primary. This referendum also makes minor rewording updates (no procedural updates) to improve readability, consistency with state law, and to reflect current election practices.

A Yes vote would revise language relating to when St Petersburg elections will be held to make it clear how the elections align with the state elections. Make minor changes to the language relating to elections in the City Charter.

A No vote would leave City Charter language as is, which does not address when the St Petersburg elections would be held if the state converted to a two-primary system.

St Petersburg Referendum #1 - Stormwater, Wastewater and/or Potable Water Improvements General Obligation Bond Referendum

Ballot Language:

Shall the City finance storm resilience improvements, including but not limited to, floodwater protection, stormwater pump stations, drainage infrastructure, as well as wastewater collection and treatment facilities, drinking water distribution and supply facilities, by issuing general obligation bonds in one or more series, not exceeding \$600,000,000, bearing interest not exceeding maximum legal rates, maturing not more than 30 years from each issuance date, pledging the City's full faith, credit, and unlimited ad valorem taxing power?

Synopsis:

The purpose of this referendum is to approve issuing bonds to finance up to \$600 million for storm, waste and drinking water system upgrades in the face of more intense storms and rising sea levels. Including interest, the total cost will be approx. \$1 billion. The money would be repaid through a new annual property tax over 30 years. The estimated cost to property owners is \$96 annually for every \$100,000 of taxable property value. These infrastructure needs are detailed in the SPAR plan (St. Pete Agile Resilience).

What is a General Obligation Bond and how does it work?

A General Obligation (GO) Bond is a financing tool used by cities and municipalities to borrow an upfront lump sum to fund specific public improvements. Unlike revenue bonds backed by utility fees, GO bonds are backed by the City's "full faith and credit." This means property taxes must be pledged to repay the debt. This makes them lower risk for investors, resulting in lower interest rates. For the proposed \$600 million General Obligation bond, the estimated interest rate is 4.5% over 30 years, issued in multiple bond series from 2027 to 2030.

Not all St Petersburg property owners are utility customers and not all utility customers are property owners. Using the GO bond, in addition to utility fees, distributes costs across all city residences and businesses. The estimated cost to property owners (\$96 annually per \$100,000 of taxable value) is less than the estimated \$486 annual utility rate increase needed to implement the same improvements without GO financing within the 19-year timeframe. Note: if the State Constitutional Amendment on increased property tax exemptions passes, a millage rate greater than the \$96/\$100,000 will be required.

What is SPAR (<https://www.stpete.org/residents/sustainability/spar/index.php>)?

SPAR (St. Pete Agile Resilience) is the City's plan for prioritizing and accelerating resilience work to upgrade the stormwater, wastewater, and drinking water infrastructure. SPAR requires long-term investment and funding choices that impact timing and costs. From 2027-2050, projects for stormwater, potable water, and wastewater are estimated at \$4.4 billion, of which SPAR projects represent \$2.7 billion. The priority list of \$2.7 billion in drainage and other water projects is estimated to take 24 years to finish using current utility rates. Issuing the bonds would shorten the timeline to approximately 19 years.

SPAR projects are currently funded through utility rates. Utility-rate funding means costs are paid through monthly utility bills. Projects are delivered as funds become available over time. This means the delivery timeline is longer, and costs are tied to utility use and the billing structure.

To reduce flood risks from heavy rains, possible investments include upsizing pipes and culverts, widening ditches, creating new bypass routes and adjusting road grades for improved drainage. The city would look at expanding capacity in canals, creeks,

and ditches, increasing storage through interconnected ponds and adding stormwater pump stations.

For flood-prone areas, the city is looking at installing flood gate systems. They would use engineered and natural barriers to prevent tidal backflow from entering nearby water bodies.

To avoid sewage backups, the city would add capacity to tanks to prevent groundwater and surface water from entering the city's collection system during heavy rains. The city would consider elevating wastewater collection plants to avoid flooding and installing permanent generators as backup power during outages.

To reduce the need for residents to boil water after storms, the city would consider repairing or replacing drinking water pipes. The city would install generators at pumping and treatment facilities, increase capacity in water storage tanks, and elevate facilities to protect them from flooding.

The League of Women Voters of the St Petersburg Area and the Suncoast Sierra Club support the passage of this referendum. These groups support ongoing public involvement, transparent expenditure of funds, and program updates as the plans are refined and executed.

A Yes vote would mean that the City would proceed with issuing the GO bonds estimated to reduce the time to complete eligible infrastructure improvements from 24 years to 19 years.

A No vote would mean the infrastructure improvements would continue under existing utility bill funding sources (via utility rate increases) and be implemented over the longer timeframe of 24 years instead of 19 years.

St Petersburg Referendum #2 - Authorizing Amendment of Harborage Marina Lease to Extend Term to 30 Years and Require Improvements

Ballot Language:

May City Council approve amendment of the lease of City-owned submerged lands at Harborage Marina subject to conditions in ordinance 640-H? Such an amendment would extend the lease term to 30 years and require the tenant to construct new improvements at no cost to the City, including 200 linear feet of docks, boat lifts, and expanded restrooms. The City would own those improvements at the end of the lease.

Synopsis:

The purpose of this referendum is to amend the current Harborage Marina lease to extend its term and require new improvements at the marina. The original lease dates back to 1986 and has been amended four times.

The tenant (Harborage Marina, L.L.C.) must construct, at no cost to the City, 200 linear feet of new docks (with fire suppression, water, and electric service), new boat lifts, and expanded restrooms. All improvements become City property at the end or early termination of the lease. The leased area, located at 1110 3rd St S., cannot be expanded beyond what was authorized in the 2018 referendum (approx. 13.4 acres).

City officials estimate the extended lease would generate approximately \$4.5 million in additional lease revenue over its lifetime while modernizing aging marina infrastructure. The referendum would extend Harborage Marina's lease to 30 years, which enables long-term financing of approximately \$2.15 million in capital improvements.

A Yes vote would extend the current Harborage Marina lease up to 30 years, while requiring specific upgrades to the marina.

A No vote would keep the current term of the lease, which expires in 2048, and not require any marina upgrades.

City of Largo Amendment:

Largo Amendment #1 - Change of Date when Petitions for Candidates for Mayor and City Commission are First Available

Ballot Language:

Shall section 7.02(a) of the City of Largo Charter be amended to change the date that petitions for candidates for Mayor and City Commission are first available to March 15th of each year of a regular city election, or a date selected by the City Commission for a special election, all as more fully described in Ordinance No. 2025 - 24?

Synopsis:

The date when candidate petitions become available was not updated in the City Charter to reflect the change in the City's regular election to November. The City Charter currently states petitions would be available 45 days before the start of the qualifying period set by the City Commission.

This amendment would set the date that petitions become available to candidates to be March 15th of the year of a regular city

election. If March 15th falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday observed by the City, the petitions shall be available on the immediately preceding business day. For any special elections held outside the normal election schedule, the petitions will be available on a date established by the City Commission.

A Yes Vote Would set the date petitions become available to City of Largo Mayoral and City Commission candidates to March 15, or the prior business day if a weekend/holiday.

A No Vote Would leave the date at 45 days before the qualifying period, which the City Commission sets each election year.

City of Madeira Beach Amendments:

Charter Amendments #1 through #3 must all be passed together in order to properly implement Ordinance 2026-07.

City of Madeira Beach Charter Amendment #1 - Change Municipal Election Date from March to November

Ballot Language:

Shall the City of Madeira Beach Charter be amended to change the date of regular municipal elections from March to November, so City elections occur in conjunction with the State General Election?

Synopsis:

Currently, the City of Madeira Beach holds its election in March. If this amendment is approved, Ordinance 2026-07 would become effective. The ordinance would shift elections to November to coincide with the state general election. The change is intended to save taxpayer money as the City currently is required to pay the costs of a March election. Additionally, November elections have higher voter turnout than March elections.

A Yes Vote Would: change the City's municipal elections from March to November. The March 2027 election would be moved to November 2027.

A No Vote Would: leave the City's municipal election schedule as is in March.

Madeira Beach Charter Amendment #2 - Change Candidate Qualifying Period from December to June

Ballot Language:

Shall the City of Madeira Beach Charter be amended to change the municipal candidate qualifying period from the first two full weeks in December, excluding weekends, to the first two full weeks in June, excluding weekends, to align with the revised November municipal general election schedule?

Synopsis:

Currently, the City of Madeira Beach holds its election in March. If this amendment is approved, Ordinance 2026-07 would become effective. The ordinance would shift elections to November to coincide with the state general election. In order to accommodate this change, the candidate qualifying period must be moved from December to June. The change is intended to save taxpayer money as the City currently is required to pay the costs of a March election. Additionally, November elections have higher voter turnout than March elections.

A Yes Vote Would: change the candidate qualifying period from December to June to align with changing the elections from March to November.

A No Vote Would: leave candidate qualifying period in December.

Madeira Beach Charter Amendment #3 - Extend Terms of Elected Officials to Implement November Elections

Ballot Language:

Shall the City Charter be amended to temporarily extend the terms of Commissioner District 3 and Commissioner District 4 until certification of the November 2027 election results; and the terms of Commissioner District 1, Commissioner District 2, and Mayor-Commissioner until certification of the November 2028 election results in order to implement the transition from March municipal elections to November municipal general elections?

Synopsis:

Currently, the City of Madeira Beach holds its election in March. If this amendment is approved, Ordinance 2026-07 would become effective. The ordinance would shift elections to November to coincide with the state general election. In order to accommodate this change, the terms of the Commissioners and Mayor need to be extended this one-time. The Commissioner District 3 and 4 terms will be extended November 2027 and the terms of Commissioner District 1, 2, and Mayor-Commissioner

will be extended until November 2028.

A Yes Vote Would: extend the terms of the Commissioners and Mayor to properly align with the change from March to November elections.

A No Vote Would: leave the terms of the Commissioners and Mayor ending too soon, prior to the next applicable election.

Town of Belleair Amendments:

Town of Belleair Charter Amendment #1 - Removing the requirement the Town Commission Appoint a Planning and Zoning Board

Ballot Language:

Shall Section 5.04 of the Charter for the Town of Belleair be amended to remove the requirement that the Town Commission appoint a planning and zoning board because the language is unnecessary since Florida law requires the Town to appoint a local planning agency?

Synopsis:

The purpose of the proposed Amendment (Ordinance #597) is to amend the Charter to remove the requirement that the Town Commission appoint the Planning and Zoning Board. The Planning and Zoning Board is the only board required by the Town's Charter and the language is unnecessary because Section 163.3174, Florida Statutes, requires the Town Commission to appoint a local planning agency.

The proposed change was recommended by the Charter Review Committee to clean up redundant text.

A Yes Vote Would: Remove Section 5.04 of the Belleair Charter requiring a Planning and Zoning Board

A No Vote Would: Leave Section 5.04 in the Belleair Charter requiring a Planning and Zoning Board

Town of Belleair Charter Amendment #2 - Amending the Month the Charter Review Committee is Established

Ballot Language:

Shall Section 10.01 of the Charter for the Town of Belleair be amended to change the month the Charter Review Committee is established from June to May beginning in 2036 thereby providing the Charter Review Committee sufficient time to perform its duties and provide the Town with the time necessary to meet Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections deadlines allowing proposed amendments to be on the ballot for the general election the following November?

Synopsis:

The purpose of the proposed Amendment (Ordinance 598) is to amend the Charter to require the Town Commission to establish the Charter Review Committee before or during the month of May, every ten years, beginning in 2036, instead of the month of June. This change would allow the Charter Review Committee sufficient time to perform its duties and provide the Town with the time necessary to meet the Pinellas County Supervisor of Election's deadlines in order to ensure the proposed amendments are on the ballot for the general election in November.

The proposed change was recommended by the Charter Review Committee.

A Yes Vote Would: Change the month that the Charter Review Committee begins meeting, every 10 years, from June to May to allow more time to complete its review in time for the November election.

A No Vote Would: Leave the month that the Charter Review Committee begins meeting, every 10 years, in June.

City of Treasure Island Amendment:

City of Treasure Island Charter Amendment #1 - Shall Charter be Amended Requiring Four Commissioners' Approval for Planned Developments or Special Area Plans?

Ballot Language:

Shall the Treasure Island City Charter Section 3.07(c) be amended to require that "a supermajority vote of four members of the Board of Commissioners shall be required for the approval of any planned developments or special area plans?" This provision will become effective immediately upon approval by the electors or as otherwise provided by law.

Synopsis:

This amendment is the result of a citizen-initiative petition. The push for a stricter four-vote requirement follows community debate over post-hurricane redevelopment, building heights, and density rules (such as proposals allowing properties like the

Thunderbird Beach Resort to rebuild taller or denser). Currently, only a simple majority of 3 votes is required to approve developments.

City commissioners have separately debated this issue. In order to balance post-storm economic recovery and preservation of the island's low-rise community character, the Commission has considered options such as requiring 4 votes only when projects request absolute maximum height and density limits.

A Yes Vote Would: Require a super-majority (4 out of 5 commissioners) approval vote for planned developments, rather than the current requirement for 3 approval votes, a simple majority.

A No Vote Would: Leave the current requirement of a simple majority, 3 commissioner votes, to approve a planned development.

Town of Redington Shores Referendums:

Town of Redington Shores Referendum #1 - Commissioners' Term of Office

Ballot Language:

Charter Section 5 currently provides that the term of office for a Commissioner is two years. Should Section 5 of the Charter be amended to convert terms of the Commissioners to three years?

Synopsis:

This referendum (Ordinance 2026-01) would change the term of office for Commissioners from 2 years to 3 years beginning with the general election in November 2027. Commencing with the November 2027 election, Commissioners from Districts 2 and 4 would serve 3 year terms. Commencing with the November 2028 election, Commissioners from Districts 1 and 3 would serve 3 year terms.

The Board of Commissioners determined that it is in the Town's best interests to leave the term of office for the Mayor at three years. In order to maintain staggered mayoral and commissioner terms, this referendum would shorten the 2027 mayoral term to 2 years, and then in 2029, return the term of the Mayor to 3-year terms. The Board of Commissioners feels that making these changes allows commissioners to better serve their constituents by having a longer term and reducing the frequency of Elections.

This referendum is directly tied to Referendum #2 - Mayoral 2027 Term of Office.

A Yes Vote Would: change to term of office for the Commissioners from 2 years to 3 years.

A No Vote Would: leave the term of office for the Commissioners at 2 years.

Town of Redington Shores Referendum #2 - Mayoral 2027 Term of Office

Ballot Language:

Charter Section 5 currently provides that the term of office for the Mayor is three years. If Referendum Question #1 passes extending the term of office for a Commissioner to three years should the Charter be amended to provide the term of office for the Mayor following the 2027 general election only be two years to maintain staggered terms of office for the Mayor and Commissioners?

Synopsis:

This referendum (Ordinance 2026-02) changes the Town's election date from March to November to align with State elections and reduce the cost and frequency of elections in the Town. It amends the qualifying period to correspond with the new November election date. The candidate filing period would move from December to July. This also extends the commissioners' terms for Districts 2 and 4, set to expire in March 2027, until the November 2027 election. Districts 1 and 3 will be held in the November 2028 general election.

If passed, this referendum only goes into effect if Referendum #1 - Commissioners' Term of Office also passes.

A Yes Vote Would: change the Town's elections from March to November to align with State elections

A No Vote Would: leave the Town's elections in March