



Legislative Session: Week Four

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Week Four of our 2021 legislative session is now complete. We are quickly approaching our 30/30 mark - that is, our legislative session will be half-way over as of this Wednesday, March 31. Stay tuned for continued updates and please ask questions and stay involved. This week's update is below.

While vaccines are continuing to be provided, I still encourage you to continue practicing social distancing and safety measures such as washing your hands often. Stay well and healthy.

Our Tallahassee line is 850.487.5031 and my email is Berman.Lori.Web@flsenate.gov.

Happy Spring,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Berman" followed by a horizontal line.

Lori

IMPORTANT VACCINE UPDATES

The age of eligibility for vaccines will officially be **lowered** to 40+ on Monday, 3/29 and to 18+ on Monday, 4/5.

For those who are homebound and need a vaccine, email HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com with your name and phone number to put in your request.

The Florida Department of Emergency Management (FDEM) will contact you within 72 hours to collect more information & schedule your appointment.



STRONGER TOGETHER...

PALM BEACH COUNTY VACCINATION SITES

If you are:

- Long-term care facility resident and staff
- Person 60 years of age and older
- Health care personnel with direct patient contact
- K-12 school employee 50 years of age and older
- Sworn law enforcement officer 50 years of age and older
- Firefighter 50 years of age and older
- Person deemed to be extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 by hospital providers

You can get vaccinated here:

- Vaccines for Homebound Seniors E-mail HomeboundVaccine@em.myflorida.com
- Health Care District of PBC <http://vaccine.hcdpbc.org/> [vaccine.hcdpbc.org] (by appointment only)
- Florida Department of Health <https://myvaccine.fl.gov/en/site/Palm%20Beach> [myvaccine.fl.gov]
- Publix Pharmacies www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/
- CVS Pharmacies www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine
- Walmart/Sam's Club Pharmacies www.walmart.com/cp/1228302
- Winn-Dixie Pharmacies www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine
- Walgreens Pharmacies <https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp>
- Federally-Supported Vaccine Sites www.floridadisaster.org/vaccine

If you are:

- K-12 school employee, daycare and preschool worker or staff regardless of age

You can get vaccinated here:

- Publix Pharmacies www.publix.com/covid-vaccine/
- CVS Pharmacies www.cvs.com/immunizations/covid-19-vaccine
- Walmart/Sam's Club Pharmacies www.walmart.com/cp/1228302
- Winn-Dixie Pharmacies www.winndixie.com/pharmacy/covid-vaccine
- Federally-Supported Vaccine Sites www.floridadisaster.org/vaccine

* subject to change

#PBCStrong #TeamPBC #TeamPBCTogether

Budget

Today, [the Florida Senate released its proposed budget, SPB 2500](#). As we enter budget conference, the Appropriation Chairs of both the House and Senate will negotiate to get to the same dollar amounts in each silo. [Click here for a summary of the Senate's proposed budget](#).

Below, you'll find a spreadsheet of all the appropriation requests I have submitted. They are color coded, with green indicating that the projects were funded and included in the proposed budget. These dollar amounts are subject to change over the course of budget conference. Once the budget is passed by both the House and Senate, it moves on to the Governor for his signature. The Governor has the power of line-item veto.

If you have any questions about the budget, please don't hesitate to reach out to us!

Initial Budget Offers

LFIR #	Project Title	Subcommittee	Requested	Senate Position	House Position	House Sponsor
1236	RESTORE Reentry Program	ACJ	500,000	250,000	250,000	Willhite
1596	Community Outreach Team	ACJ	525,190	0	0	Caruso
1309	The City of Delray Beach Learning Loss Recovery Tutorial Program	AED	80,000	80,000	0	Hardy
1597	City of Delray Beach - Summer Reading Books	AED	20,000	20,000	0	Hardy
1050	Palm Springs Davis Road North Basin Drainage Improvements	AEG	163,000	0	0	Silvers
1069	Hypoluxo Septic Sewer	AEG	350,000	0	0	Caruso
1234	Lantana - Sea Pines Neighborhood Drainage Improvements	AEG	562,500	0	0	
1595	Lake Worth Beach Eden Park Sea Level Rise Mitigation	AEG	250,000	0	0	Caruso
1310	Lake Worth Beach South Palm Park Sea Level Rise Mitigation	AEG	300,000	0	0	Caruso
1380	Lake Clarke Shores Sewer Construction Phase 2	AEG	1,000,000	0	0	Silvers
2097	LWLI Monitoring Program	AEG	250,000	250,000	0	Caruso
1311	Lake Worth Beach Florida Ocean Current Energy:Phase 1	AEG	3,000,000	0	0	Caruso
1598	Delray Beach Owens Baker Tank Improvements	AEG	486,256	250,000	0	Caruso
1599	Boynton Beach - Heart of Boynton Revitalization MLK Blvd.	AEG	240,000	0	0	Hardy
1600	Greenacres - Swain Boulevard Sewer Extension Phase 1	AEG	300,000	0	0	Silvers
1235	EJS Project Teen Center	AHS	155,000	155,000	0	Hardy
1232	Caregiving Youth Project Expansion	AHS	250,000	250,000	125,000	Caruso
1233	Jewish Family Service - Mental Health First Aid Coalition	AHS	100,000	100,000	0	Silvers
1308	ChildNet - Preventing Opioid/Substance Abuse Based Removals	AHS	360,000	0	0	Silvers
1231	Palm Beach County Homeless Resource Center 2	AHS	1,000,000	0	0	Silvers
1381	Central Palm Beach County Historical Infrastructure Improvement	ATD	3,000,000	0	1,500,000	Silvers
1936	Pompey Park Improvements - Delray Beach	ATD	250,000	0	0	Caruso
1990	Boynton Beach Town Square Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing	ATD	75,000	75,000	75,000	Casello
TOTAL			13,216,946	1,430,000	1,950,000	

Bill Action Update

SB 224: Sales Tax Exemption

Heard in the Senate Finance and Tax Committee on Thursday, SB 224 passed unanimously. Its next stop is the Appropriations Committee. This bill provides exemptions for seniors from sales tax on certain items that encourage independent living, including bed transfer handles, bed rails, grab bars, and shower seats, to improve quality of life and allow our seniors to "age in place".

SB 1070: Estates and Trusts

This bill creates the "Florida Uniform Directed Trust Act" addressing trusts that grant a trust administration power to a person other than a trustee, and create the "Community Property Trust Act" that allows spouses to transfer property into a Florida Community Property Trust. The bill was heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee and passed unanimously. Its next stop is the Senate Community Affairs Committee on Tuesday, March 30.

SB 196: Lactation Spaces in Courthouses

Heard in the Senate Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee, the bill passed unanimously. SB 196 requires county courthouses to have a designated space for women to breastfeed. An exemption exists if a courthouse administrator determines a major construction overhaul would be required. I am appreciative of the Florida Association of Women Lawyers (FAWL) and the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) programs for helping push this bill forward. Its next stop is the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice.

Bills to Note

SB 50: Taxes and Fees on Remote Sales

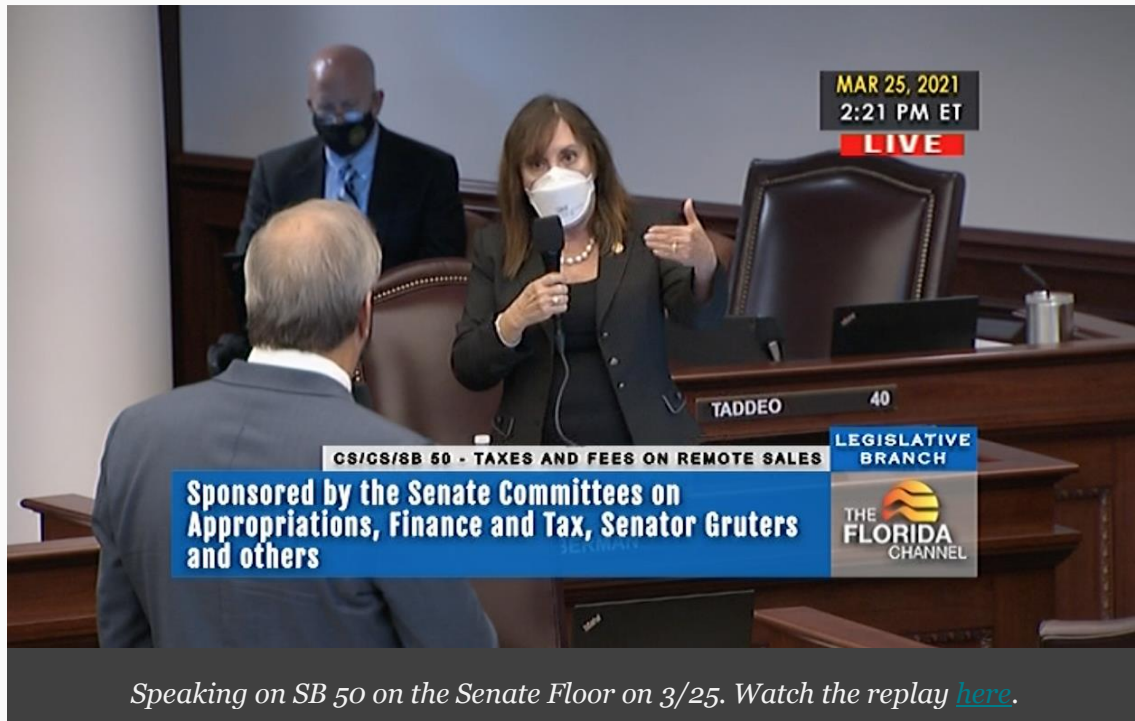
This bill instates an online sales tax for purchases. In the status quo, a state sales tax is not usually collected from online purchases, only in brick-and-mortar stores. Currently, it is expected that Floridians who make online purchases from out-of-state retailers will submit the total sales tax they owe to the state at the end of the year. While this is the expectation, it is not often the reality. This bill aims

to rectify this inequality by collecting sales tax on out-of-state online retail purchases at the time of purchase. It is the hope of the bill sponsors that the funds from this new tax will replenish the unemployment fund. Senate Bill 50 passed the Senate Floor yesterday and its House companion, HB 15, is in its last committee.

This legislation is long-overdue and I support it in concept, but unfortunately, because the unemployment trust fund will be balanced on the back of these dollars, I could not vote in favor of the bill. We need to consider other means to balance the unemployment trust fund separate from the online sales tax - ideally without providing more corporate tax breaks.

SB 100: Highway Projects

This bill repeals the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance (M-CORES) program and instead authorizes the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to upgrade existing highways with improvements, such as adding new tolled or non-tolled limited access sections to manage highway congestion. In 2019, Governor DeSantis signed the M-CORES program into law, which was intended to revitalize rural communities and provide regional connectivity. The legislature instructed FDOT to assemble task forces prior to the construction of these roads to study the three corridors: the Suncoast Connector, the Northern Turnpike Connector, and the Southwest-Central Florida Connector. All three task forces, however, were unable to make a determination about the needs and impacts of each corridor because there was limited data available. Instead, they called upon FDOT to continue its evaluation of the corridors using certain guidelines and stated a preference for improving already existing highways instead of proceeding with the new roads. SB 100 repeals the original legislation and implements the task forces' recommendations, which I supported. SB 100 passed the Senate floor on March 25 and will soon be heard in the House.



American Rescue Plan

- **Direct Payments to Working Families & Expanding Child Tax Credit** - Providing working families an additional direct payment of \$1,400 per person.
 - **Expanding the Child Tax Credit** - The bill makes the child tax credit fully refundable for 2021 and increases the annual amount from the current \$2,000 per child to \$3,000 per child.
 - **Increase COVID-19 Vaccinations** - Providing over \$20 billion to establish a national COVID-19 vaccination program and improve the administration and distribution of vaccinations.
 - **Scaling up COVID-19 Testing, contact tracing, and mitigation** - \$47.8 billion for testing, contact tracing, and mitigation.
 - **Providing the resources needed to allow schools to safely reopen** - \$130 billion available to states and school districts for immediate and long term relief so they can work with public health
-

experts to safely re-open schools and make up for lost time in the classroom.

- **Extending unemployment benefits** - extends the federal supplemental benefit unemployment benefit through September 6, while keeping the benefit at the current \$300 per week.
- **Housing Assistance** - \$22.5 billion for emergency rental and utility assistance to states, territories, counties, and cities to help stabilize renters during the pandemic
- **Food Security** - Extends SNAP maximum benefits by 15% (through September 30, 2021)
- **Ensuring Affordable Child Care** - \$39 billion through the Child Care and Development Block Grant for child care providers
- **Supporting Small Businesses and Non Profits** - Creates a \$28.66 billion Restaurant Revitalization Fund.
- **State and Local Funding** - \$350 billion for states, localities, the U.S. territories, and the Tribal Governments, including to help keep critical workers on the job.

Estimates for State and Local Funding

Please note these are only estimates and final amounts may differ

- State of Florida - \$10.2 billion
- Palm Beach County - \$290 million
- Palm Beach County School District - \$400 million


CARES Food Cards

As a reminder, Palm Beach County residents who qualified for pre-paid debit cards through the CARES ACT funding for food purchases must activate their cards by March 31, 2021.

Cards not activated by March 31, 2021 will expire, and the funds will be swept and redirected to fund other identified needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Cardholders are encouraged to activate their pre-paid debit cards for food assistance prior to the expiration date.

For more information, call the CSD's Contact Center at (561) 355-4792.

Health Insurance Special Enrollment Period

An advertisement for the Health Insurance Special Enrollment Period. It features a woman with dark curly hair looking at her smartphone. The text reads: "Find health coverage now. Enroll through May 15". Below this, it says "You can enroll in or change plans now, or see if you qualify for Medicaid or CHIP". There are two green buttons: "TAKE THE FIRST STEP TO APPLY" and "LOG IN TO CHANGE PLANS". At the bottom, it says "Looking for coverage for a small business? Learn more".

Find health coverage now.
Enroll through May 15

You can enroll in or change plans now, or see if you qualify for Medicaid or CHIP

TAKE THE FIRST STEP TO APPLY LOG IN TO CHANGE PLANS

Looking for coverage for a small business? [Learn more](#)

On March 10th, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan, which expands access to quality health care. The Biden-Harris Administration opened a special enrollment period for [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov) from February 15 through May 15 for all Americans to provide them with the opportunity to sign up for health insurance during this pandemic. Health care is a right and all Americans should have access to it.



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