

CURRENT ISSUES & TALKING POINTS

You can learn all you want about our elected Legislators and their proposed bills at these websites: www.FLSenate.gov and www.myFloridaHouse.gov

Shouldn't Everyone's Vote Count???

HB 39; Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote

What it is: This bill would make every vote count equally in presidential elections, guarantee the presidency to the candidate with the most votes and make it necessary for the candidates to campaign in all 50 states.

Why you should care: With the Electoral College currently in place, each state casts all their electoral votes for the candidate who won in that state, even if they won by less than 1% of the total. This 'winner take all system' means the losing 49% of voters in that state (maybe millions of people) have no effect on the national election outcome.

What can I do? Contact your Senate & House Representatives to voice your support for this bill. You can write to your local newspaper expressing your opinion on the Electoral College. Check out the National Popular Vote *Facebook* page. Check out the www.NationalPopularVote.com webpage.

Talking points:

- It's time to allow every citizen's vote to have a measurable impact on presidential elections rather than just those voters in swing states.
- Polls conducted among Florida voters each year from 2009 through 2018 show that a large majority (up to 78%, including majorities in both parties) favor the National Popular Vote over the current Electoral College method.
- This bill is strongly opposed by Republican legislators because they rely heavily on those "sure thing" red states to pull them up in the Electoral College totals each election. They will fight hard against this measure.
- The National Popular Vote has been enacted by 16 jurisdictions possessing 196 electoral votes; 15 states and the District of Columbia. The bill will take effect when passed by states with at least 74 more electoral votes.

References:

HB-39, sponsored by Rep. Joe Geller (D-Miami-Dade): Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote

SB-1092, sponsored by Senator Victor Torres (D-Orange, Osceola): Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote

Clean Energy for Florida

SB136; Energy 2040 Task Force

What it is: This bill would create a Task Force within the Public Service Commission to study and project Florida's energy needs over the next 19 years and to provide recommendations on how to meet those needs in an efficient, affordable and reliable manner. The Task Force would consider renewable energy, the competitive energy markets, and the use of different fuels and technologies.

Why you should care: Electric power is essential to our lives. Power generation methods and costs, including environmental impacts and related costs, add up to major factors in every citizen's budget. It is important that Florida has a plan that considers all aspects of power generation and that the plan is developed in coordination with all the stakeholders – including the citizens, the power companies, the environmental groups, the renewable energy equipment providers, etc.

Talking Points:

- The Task Force will consider subjects like solar and other renewable energy, sustainable energy sources, smart grid technology, energy storage, electric vehicles and distributed energy generation technologies.
- The Task Force will consider the environmental impact of electricity production, generation and transmission in Florida.
- The Task Force will submit its recommendations to the Governor, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House by January 1, 2023. There will be intense lobbying of the Task Force during 2022, and the citizens need to be sure their voice is heard. Please contact your representatives and give them your support for this bill.

References:

SB-136, Energy 2040 Task Force, filed by Senator Jeff Brandes, (R-Pinellas County)

Clean Power without the Utility Companies!

HB775, SB208 Renewable Energy

What it is: This bill authorizes selected customers to install, maintain and operate renewable energy sources and to sell that energy to an adjacent business, independently and disconnected from the existing Florida power grid and utility company structure.

You should care: because this allows the generation and sale of clean power in a system disconnected from the regulated utility companies. It is an exemption from regulation by the Public Service Commission (PSC) for these providers, and will encourage more power generation from environmentally friendly sources.

Talking Points:

- Note that this is a bi-partisan sponsored bill.
- This is one small way to reduce the monopolistic hold of the fossil fuel burning power companies on the overall energy marketplace.
- The utility companies will fight against this bill because it would have a direct and negative impact on their bottom line.

- However, the bill does provide a way for utility companies to increase rates to cover backup generation capacity or transmission lines if the new customers require it.

References:

HB-775, Renewable Energy, filed by Anika Tene Omphroy (D-Broward County)

SB-208, Renewable Energy, identical bill filed by Senator Jeff Brandes, (R-Pinellas County)

What would you like to hear about? Here are some candidates for future articles and talking points. Please provide your preferences for items either on this list or otherwise:

- Florida Senate Bill 144 - Searches of Cell Phones. Would allow search warrants to include contents of cell phones, laptops and home network devices (like Amazon Echo and Google Home - say hello to the cops, Alexa!)
- Florida Senate Bill 150 - Individual Liberty and Democracy. A Florida Senate resolution which mischaracterizes the concept of Democratic Socialism and codifies the Senate's rejection of the concept.
- Qualified Immunity for Police - protects a government official from lawsuits alleging that the official violated a plaintiff's rights, only allowing suits where officials violated a "clearly established" statutory or constitutional right. Typically used to shield police officers from prosecution following alleged abuses of power or misconduct.
- HB337 & SB750 would put new restrictions on the ability of Florida Counties & Cities to increase impact fees on new development. This is an example of Florida State Legislature taking away options from local jurisdictions.
- SB90 New voting restrictions in Florida, pushed by DeSantis
- SB410 on sex education