



Happy New Year!

As we look back on the events of 2019, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your State Senator. I feel truly blessed to have the honor to represent all of the citizens who make District 17 home.

I look forward to working with you to make 2020 full of opportunities for our citizens, visitors and businesses. From my family to yours, we wish you a very Happy New Year!

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

Florida Drug Importation Program Moves Forward

This past week Governor Ron DeSantis and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar announced the advancement of the Trump administration's plan to allow for safe and affordable prescription drug importation from Canada to multiple states, including Florida.

"The high costs of prescription drugs have plagued Floridians for too long, and today's announcement is a historic step towards a solution," said Governor DeSantis. *"I want to thank President Trump for his steadfast support of our efforts to bring this issue to the forefront as well as Secretary Azar for realizing the benefits this plan will have not only on Florida, but Americans in other states across the country. With the support of the Florida Legislature, I will continue to work to identify innovative ways to reduce health care costs for Floridians."*

"Today's announcement outlines two pathways for the safe importation of certain prescription drugs to help provide safe, effective, more affordable drugs to American patients," said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. *"These are historic actions by HHS and the FDA, and they represent the bold nature of President Trump's agenda for lowering drug costs. The President has recognized the opportunity to lower costs for American patients through safe importation, and we at HHS and FDA are delivering on that possibility through a safe, commonsense approach, and we look forward to working with leaders like Governor DeSantis to do it."*

During the 2019 Session, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 19, establishing the Prescription Drug Importation Program within the Agency for Health Care Administration, the chief health policy and planning entity for the State of Florida. The purpose of the Program is to facilitate the commercial importation of prescription drugs into Florida from approved Canadian suppliers. The list of prescription drugs that are imported under the Program must have the greatest potential for savings to the State.

Enhancing Florida's Election Security

Secretary of State Laurel Lee recently announced that Florida has been accepted for membership, along with 29 other members, into the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), a multi-state partnership that uses a sophisticated data-matching tool to enhance the accuracy of voter registration systems.

Through ERIC, member states can share information from voter registration systems, motor vehicle databases, social security death records, and U.S. Post Office records. This data-sharing agreement will help identify voters who have moved to another state, passed away, or changed their name in Florida.

In addition to enhancing the accuracy of voter rolls, ERIC also improves voter registration by providing information for member states to contact potentially eligible but unregistered voters with instructions on how to register to vote. Prior to the 2020 general election, Florida will spend \$1.3 million to contact potentially eligible voters who are not registered to vote. This outreach is conducted every two years ahead of federal general elections.

"I have heard strong support for joining ERIC from supervisors of elections all over Florida, and I am excited to provide them with one more tool to serve voters in Florida," said Florida Secretary of State Laurel M. Lee. *"Joining ERIC keeps Florida at the forefront of election security and will help us ensure fair and accurate election in 2020 and beyond."*

District 17 Highlights

FDOT Public Meeting: SR 518 at Turtle Mound Road

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will be hosting a public meeting to discuss plans to install a new traffic signal at the intersection of Eau Gallie Blvd (SR 518) and Turtle Mound Road in Melbourne.

FDOT Public Meeting: New Traffic Signal at SR 518 and Turtle Mound Road

Tuesday, January 7, 2020

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Discover Life Church

3550 W Eau Gallie Blvd, Melbourne

The purpose of this project is to signalize the intersection of Eau Gallie Blvd and Turtle Mound Road. This project also includes the extension of the right and left turn lanes onto Turtle Mound Road, along with the addition of high visibility crosswalk markings, pedestrian signals and lighting. Additional right of way will be needed for this project. Construction is expected to begin by summer 2022.

The meeting will be an informal open house format, during which attendees may view project information, speak with FDOT team members to learn more about the project and provide input. Information about this project is also available online at www.cflroads.com. Simply type 445183-1 in the search box, click "go" and then select the project.

If you have additional questions, please contact Heidi Trivett at (386) 943-5466 or email Heidi.Trivett@dot.state.fl.us.

Youth Mentoring Opportunities in Indian River County

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

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

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

Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves Presentation

The Marine Resources Council will be hosting speaker Emily Dark from the Department of Environmental Protection's Indian River Lagoon Aquatic Preserves (IRLAP) office to discuss the importance of sustainable recreation and ways you can help protect our natural areas.

Leave No Trace - Taking Care of our Natural Lands & Waters

Tuesday, January 7th at Noon
Ted Moorhead Lagoon House
3275 Dixie Hwy NE, Palm Bay, FL

The IRLAP manages seven aquatic preserves and many spoil islands within the Indian River Lagoon. The application of "Leave no Trace" practices are vital to helping preserve this incredible ecosystem. This event is free to attend and open to the public. For more information or to register, please visit SaveTheIRL.org.

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