

# *The* **RODRIGUEZ** *Report*

Dear friends and neighbors,

It is an honor to work every day serving the people of District 37. This year's Legislative Session begins on March 5th 2019 and this edition of the Rodriguez Report keeps you up to date on my efforts on behalf of our communities.

Inside you'll find out about priority legislation and important topics that will be debated in the upcoming session. Please feel free to reach out to our office with any questions or concerns.



- Senator José Javier Rodríguez



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# SESSION 2019: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## *Supporting Public Education and School Safety*

We mourn all victims of gun violence, including those lost in Parkland last February. School safety remains a top priority. I will continue to advocate for whatever policy changes, technology upgrades, enhanced services, and security resources are needed to ensure that our students, teachers, and school employees are safe. This year a bill is advancing that, if passed, would expand a program that allows for arming teachers. As I did last year, I will also continue to oppose programs that arm teachers and advocate in favor of common sense gun safety legislation such as closing loopholes in background checks.

All students deserve access not only to the safest but also the best public education we can provide. I will continue advocating against bills, including some advancing in the Legislature, that in my view promote the privatization and re-segregation of our public education system.

Finally, my colleagues and I in the Miami-Dade delegation will continue to fight to revise our state's school funding formulas that continuously disadvantage many areas of our state, especially in Miami-Dade. Last year our delegation worked hard to ensure a study that properly evaluated how our system currently works was included in the budget. This year I am proud to co-sponsor SB 1284 by Sen. Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens) to restore fairness and transparency to school funding formulas.

*"The response to gun violence should not be more guns. Teachers were hired to teach and I believe guns have no place in school if they are not in the hands of school security or law enforcement."*

*- Senator José Javier Rodríguez*

## *Amendment 4: Rights Restoration*

Floridian's voices were heard this past election and the right to vote has been restored to the millions of Floridians that have paid their debt to society. I strongly encourage all who have had their voting rights restored to go out today and register to vote! I have filed legislation, SB 1012, that would allow those whose voting rights have been restored by Amendment Four to also serve on juries.

## *Appointment Process*

A new Governor means a new administration, including new agency and department heads. These appointees will make decisions that directly impact us here in District 37. I am honored to serve on the Ethics and Elections Committee which is tasked with reviewing and confirming appointments made by the Governor. I take this responsibility very seriously and will ensure that those who get my vote are aware of the issues we face in our district and are committed to tackling them.

## *Every Vote Counts*

This session I am filing an election reform bill consisting of 13 important reforms to our elections system to ensure that every vote is counted and confidence in our system is restored. Voting is a right and it must be protected.

I have also filed SB 86 & SB 690. These bills have broad bi-partisan support and, if approved by the legislature and the voters, would prevent the bundling of constitutional amendments of the type we saw in 2018. Voters should be protected from confusing and overcomplicated amendments that lump unrelated topics together, we will continue to work together to ensure voting is accessible and understood by all Floridians.



Senator Rodríguez discussing the need to #ActOnClimateFL with architects and realtors from back home.



Sen. Rodríguez and elected officials attending the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade in South Dade



Sen. Rodríguez joined by his wife Sonia and their two children during one of his regular video updates available on Twitter at @JoseJavierJJR





# SESSION 2019: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

## *Protecting Access to Healthcare*

Access to healthcare has always been one of my top priorities during my time in the legislature. Now more than ever we must continue advocating for Florida to join the 36 other states that have accepted billions of dollars of annual federal funding to expand our Medicaid program to cover low-income working people who cannot afford health insurance. I will continue to promote access to healthcare for all Floridians in this and other ways.

## *#ActOnClimateFL*

As it has been in the past, one of my top priorities is for the State of Florida to lead on Climate Change. We need to address and plan for sea level rise. That's why I have again filed a bill, SB 78, to require construction projects funded by taxpayer dollars to complete a sea level rise impact study. This will ensure that state agencies and local governments are adequately planning for and coordinating efforts related to gradually rising seas and worsening storms.



As I have done in the past I will continue to wear my boots during the legislative session to call attention to the need to #ActOnClimateFL

## *Supporting Democracy in Venezuela*

I am proud to stand with the people of Venezuela. Last year when I sponsored successful legislation to add Maduro's repressive regime in Venezuela to the list of companies with whom the State of Florida will not do business. This year I have co-sponsored a Senate memorial urging Congress to push for the Maduro administration to allow delivery of humanitarian assistance and the passage of TPS, a status protecting Venezuelans here in the U.S. I will continue to work in support of the Venezuelan people, Guaidó and the new leadership, and in support of a return to free and fair elections.



Senator Rodríguez standing in solidarity with the Venezuelan community in Tallahassee on #salgoEl23deEnero

## *Protecting Small Businesses*

To address the prolonged construction on Flagler that has devastated our small businesses and impacted local residents, I have filed SB112. This bill would require FDOT to create a grant program for small businesses that have been severely impacted by construction, as well as policies to avoid delays in construction. Our communities welcome roadway improvements, but roadway construction must be done in a way that minimizes impacts on small businesses and local residents.

## *Tackling Discrimination*

Unfortunately, discrimination in many forms continues to plague our society. Fighting against this, I will continue to push for legislation that is fair and protects the LGBTQ+ members of our community. I have filed SB 84, which would protect children from the harmful practice of conversion therapy by providers licensed by the state. So-called "conversion therapy" is a dangerous and discredited practice that is already illegal in 15 states. I am also proud to co-sponsor the Florida Competitive Workforce Act, which seeks to finally prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.



Senator Rodríguez and colleagues tour the construction of Flagler to find out exactly what can be done to expedite this project.

## ASSIGNED COMMITTEES

I currently serve on the Ethics and Elections Committee, Rules Committee, Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government as and Vice Chair of the Judiciary Committee.

# LEGISLATION FILED FOR THE 2019 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## MINIMUM WAGE | SB 1352

For many full-time workers, the minimum wage is still below the federal poverty level. So, as I have in the past, this session I have filed legislation to gradually increase the minimum wage to \$15 dollars an hour. With rising housing and healthcare costs taking more and more of what everyday working people earn, it is past due that the hard-working members of our community are paid an honest living wage.

## RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES | SB 1086

I filed this bill to ensure domestic violence victims can break their leases if needed to escape danger and protect their families. Domestic violence victims face a mountain of obstacles to safely leave; a lease should not be one of them.

## SUNSHINE SCHOLARSHIP | SB 1354

This bill would create the "Sunshine Scholarship Program," to cover tuition and fees at community or state colleges for eligible students. It's aimed at making higher education accessible and building Florida's next generation of workers. Students should not have to take on unmanageable debt in order to earn a college degree.

## MANDATORY RETENTION | SB 1010

I filed this bill to tackle the problem of overtesting in our public school system. This legislation would prevent young students from being held back an additional year based solely on the results of one high-stakes test.

## DISPOSABLE PLASTIC BAGS | SB 694

This bill would allow coastal cities to once again regulate or ban single-use plastic bags. This is a priority for many cities in District 37, motivated by reducing pollution and litter.



### SB 168: Sanctuary Cities

Sanctuary cities do not exist in Florida. If passed, SB 168 would require local governments to spend local dollars and come close to turning all levels of government into immigration agents. This would make our community less safe and burden our local law enforcement. Unfortunately, SB 168 passed its first committee after rejecting amendments I offered to protect our local communities, students, and victims of crime. As I have in the past, I will continue to work against this harmful and divisive anti-immigrant bill.

### Drilling in the Everglades

A recent court of appeals ruling has allowed for drilling in the Everglades. As South Floridians, we depend on a healthy Everglades. I am filing legislation that would fix this and protect the Everglades from oil drilling.

### SB 1028: School Funding

This past November our communities voted to provide extra funding to our public schools in order to give well-deserved raises to our public teachers. However, there is a bill being proposed, SB 1028, seeking to take a proportional share of that money and funnel it into schools that are privately run. I am completely opposed to this bill and will work to ensure the money goes to our public school teachers as the voters intended.

## ABOUT DISTRICT 37

Senator José Javier Rodríguez proudly represents District 37 in the Florida Senate, which comprises the cities of:

City of Miami, West Miami, Key Biscayne, Coral Gables, South Miami,  
Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay, and Cutler Bay.

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