



**THE FLORIDA SENATE**  
**SENATOR DON GAETZ**  
*President*

**TO:** All Senators  
**FROM:** Don Gaetz, President  
**SUBJECT:** Protecting Florida's Most Vulnerable Children  
**DATE:** December 17, 2013

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Over the last several months, we watched in disbelief and disgust as news accounts detailed stories of sexually violent predators slipping through the cracks of our criminal justice and civil commitment system and committing unthinkable repeat offenses against Florida's most vulnerable children.

As a Senate, we began to address these abominations during our first committee week leading up to the 2014 Legislative Session, when we held a joint meeting of our Senate Committee on Judiciary, chaired by Senator Lee, and our Committee on Children, Families and Elder Affairs, chaired by Senator Sobel. The House held similar hearings. During these meetings and in the days and weeks that followed, Speaker Weatherford and I – and other Senators and House members – heard from and met with victims and advocates, law enforcement, medical professionals, and other experts. The product of our meetings, research and hearings is an aggressive legislative package which includes four bills filed today by Senators Bradley, Evers, Grimsley and Sobel. Together these bills will make Florida scorched earth for those who seek to harm our children.

I know you feel as I do when I say if government should have any role at all, it should be to protect those most vulnerable among us. When confronted with clear evidence that current laws and administrative systems are not working well enough, the leaders of our Senate committees with jurisdiction over criminal justice, human services, and children and families are proposing swift and comprehensive action.

As a 40-member Senate, it's natural and expected that we don't always agree on some issues. We come from different communities with diverse points of view. However, I'm confident we can rally around a bipartisan, bicameral effort to make Florida the most unfriendly place in America for sexually violent criminals.

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Speaker Weatherford and our friends in the House share the same concerns and are equally committed to solid solutions. I look forward to this legislation being a centerpiece of our joint House and Senate agenda and to sending it to Governor Scott early in session.

I have attached summaries of the bills filed today, and encourage you to reach out to Senators Sobel, Bradley, Evers, Grimsley, or to me personally with any questions, criticisms and suggestions to help make this legislation better and stronger.