



## A MESSAGE FROM SENATOR STEWART

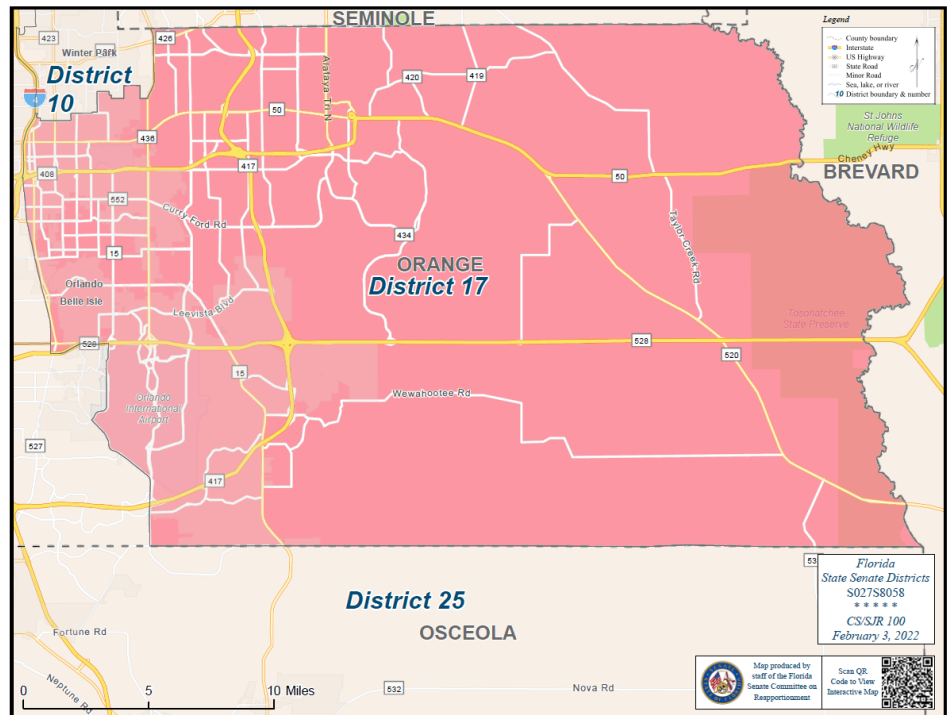
Dear Friends and Neighbors,

With the conclusion of the 2023 Legislative Session on May 5th, I wanted to share with you a recap of the decisions made in Tallahassee and accomplishments of my offices.

My focus continues to be fighting for the core principles that you've entrusted me to represent. This session I worked on bills to protect our most vulnerable citizens, preserve our environment, and make Florida a safer and more affordable place to live.

## A NEW, BUT FAMILIAR DISTRICT

As you may be aware, after last year's redistricting cycle, I now represent you in senate district 17. Many of you may previously know me as the district boundaries have not changed significantly, but for some I am a new face and am happy to welcome you to the district!



## BILLS PASSED

During the 2023 session, two of my sponsored bills passed, along with many others that I served as a co-sponsor on. Bills are very difficult to pass, ideas often need a lot of work, and sometimes even great bills can get bogged down in the process. Anytime we pass a bill, it is a big deal, and I am very proud that I was able to carry the following important pieces of legislation across the finish line this session:



**SB 1002 – Motor Vehicle Glass** – This bill has long been an issue my offices have worked on. The bill makes multiple changes around the process of windshield replacement, and will prohibit a replacement service provider from offering an incentive to a customer for using their business, such as a cash offer or free dinner. It also prohibits consumers from entering an assignment of post-loss benefits contract for the replacement and calibration of the windshield. By eliminating the assignment of benefits practice we stop the handful of dishonest replacement services from suing your insurer, creating excessive litigation and costs that result in increases to automotive insurance rates.

**SB 1564 – Year-round School Pilot Program** – With the signing into law, this bill grants the Department of Education to design and conduct a voluntary year-round school pilot program for elementary students. School districts would need to apply to participate and be selected by the department according to a list of criteria that will allow for the most comprehensive data to be collected. After the pilot completion the Commissioner of Education would draft and present a report of the feasibility of year-round schools.

## BILLS HEARD

In addition to the bills passed, many other meaningful bills were filed, but did not make it completely through the process. Many of my bills were heard in committees, and while they ultimately did not make it across the finish line this session, important discussions have now taken place and put us ahead of the start line for the coming session.

**SB 506 – Comprehensive Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan** – I was able to move this bill to its final committee in the Senate before it stalled out. The bill would have instructed the Department of Environmental Protection to develop a comprehensive waste reduction and recycling plan based on the recommendations outlined in DEP’s “2020 Recycling Goal Final Report”.

**SB 1282 – Restroom Requirements** – This bill would have created a requirement for all new and future refurbished public restrooms to install a hook within reach of the toilet. This simple requirement would have major effects for individuals who may have medical devices that must stay within a limited proximity of their person by allowing them easier access while in the restroom.



**SB 716 – Flood Zone Disclosures for Dwelling Units** – After the historic and unexpected flooding we saw from hurricane Ian, I filed a bill that would require landlords and tenant agencies to post notification to current and potential renters regarding their dwellings flood risk. This bill would have continued my fight for renters rights by requiring transparency and keeping tenants updated if they are at risk of flooding.

### **DISTRICT 17 IN THE BUDGET**

Each year, the legislature is required to pass only one bill: the General Appropriations Act. Composing legislation for an annual budget is a difficult task, requiring legislators to balance the funding behind many different priorities to best support Floridians. This year we have continued to break records by passing our largest budget yet at \$116.5 billion, allowing us to fund many beneficial programs for Floridians. With funds from the federal government we were able to fund projects to increase our supply of affordable housing, preserve and rehabilitate our environment, and implement consumer tax breaks on gas, diapers, disaster preparedness, and items for back-to-school.

### **\$29 MILLION FOR CENTRAL FLORIDA**

An important part of the budget process is securing specific appropriations for organizations and projects in our community, and I am happy to bring home over \$29 million dollars for a variety of organizations across Central Florida. Below is a breakdown of the dollars and the vital projects they will help fund:

- Developing STEM Learning Zones in City Communities - \$250,000
- Adolescent Mental Health Services for the Uninsured - \$175,000
- Devereux support services to individuals with Dual Diagnosis - \$500,000
- City of Apopka - Regional Trail Connections - \$2,000,000
- AdventHealth – Type 1 Diabetes Research Pilot - \$796,063
- Valencia College – Lake Nona Campus Building #2 - \$5,000,000
- University of Central Florida - College of Nursing Building - \$14,781,430
- City of Belle Isle – Hoffner Avenue Traffic Improvements - \$1,500,000

- Homeless Services Network –Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project – \$1,000,000
- IDignity – Statewide Operational Headquarters – \$1,000,000
- BRIDG – Microchip Advanced Packaging Design Center \$2,950,000

## **POLICY PERSPECTIVES**

As legislators we debate many important topics throughout session and there was legislation that I did not agree with from a policy prospective. Bills that restrict women’s healthcare rights, reduce access to voting, marginalize communities, and educational bills making teacher’s jobs more difficult, are just a few examples of bills I could not support. I was also opposed to the state’s intervention into the business of the Walt Disney Corporation, a long time pillar of our community here in Central Florida.

My offices are looking forward to serving you throughout my final coming year in the Senate, and I will continue to fight unfair policies and for our freedoms!

Hola vecinos,

Con la conclusión de la Sesión Legislativa de 2023 el 5 de mayo, quería compartir con ustedes los logros de mis cargos. Trabajé en proyectos de ley para proteger a nuestros ciudadanos más vulnerables, preservar nuestro medio ambiente y hacer de Florida un lugar más seguro y asequible para vivir.

Pude aprobar un proyecto de ley que eliminaría las estafas de reemplazo de parabrisas en un esfuerzo por reducir los costos de seguros de automóviles. También obtuve más de \$29 millones de dólares, mencionados anteriormente, para servicios y proyectos importantes en nuestra área.

¡Mis oficinas esperan poder servirle durante mi próximo año final en el Senado, y continuaré luchando contra las políticas injustas y por sus libertades!

## **Offices**

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