



THE BERMAN BULLETIN

THE OFFICAL PUBLICATION OF SENATE DISTRICT 31



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Senate Democratic Whip

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Agriculture, Environment,
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Education

Environment and Natural
Resources

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

October 2019

Fall is a time of great change, and as we enter it, let us be mindful of the strength that change sometimes requires. One in eight women will get breast cancer in their lifetime, a statistic that makes October, Breast Cancer Awareness month, that much more important. Spreading awareness, encouraging early detection, and supporting education efforts saves thousands of lives.

If we could all target one area in our lives that requires change, or a fight, and work hard to overcome it, like the many women who defeat breast cancer every year, we would all be better people, neighbors, and citizens. I know where my fight resides – in Tallahassee, where great change always seems to be needed. Our team will work day and night to make sure District 31 has a part to play in that change.

Local Events and Happenings

This past month saw a fruitful delegation meeting. Our State Attorney, Dave Aronberg, made a legislative recommendation that would clarify our state's definition of domestic battery as domestic violence, and I am exploring its implementation into a bill I filed last year.

Our office also attended a lunch and learn with the Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network, an organization tasked with providing important and timely wraparound services to patients with mental health needs. This opportunity further strengthened my commitment to fully fund our community's mental health services.

Most recently, my staff and I toured Martin Correctional Facility in Indiantown. I was uneasy to learn that our state's correctional officers are required to work twelve hour shifts five days a week. The Warden expressed that this is his biggest concern, because longer hours lead to higher staff turnover rates and safety issues with inmates. Our office will look into increased funding to ensure Florida's correctional facilities are able to focus on rehabilitation efforts for our inmate population.



*With Martin Correctional Institution
administration officials*



*Florida Competitive Workforce Act press
conference, 9/18/19*

Legislative Updates

Our fall legislative season has officially kicked off. See below for the full list of delegation meetings, public hearings and joint workshops. If you would like to speak at a future meeting, you can reach the Palm Beach County Delegation Office at 561-355-2406.

Date/Time	Location	Details
Thursday, October 3 9:00am-12:00pm	Norton Museum of Art 1450 South Dixie Highway, WPB	Local Bill and Public Hearing
Tuesday, December 3 9:30am-11:00am 11:00am-12:30pm	Palm Beach State College Loxahatchee Groves Campus 15845 Southern Blvd., Loxahatchee	Public Hearing Joint Meeting with the Palm Beach County League of Cities
Thursday, October 31 9:00am-10:30am 10:30am-12:00pm	Morikami Museum & Japanese Gardens 4000 Morikami Park Road, Delray Beach	Joint Meeting with the Palm Beach County Commission Joint Meeting with the Palm Beach County School Board

Committee weeks will continue through the weeks of October 14, October 21, November 4, November 12 and December 9. Legislative Session will begin on Tuesday, January 14, 2020.

In recent weeks, our office has received a lot of support around a bill I sponsored last session, SB 1156: Community Solar Program. This bill allows electric customers in Florida to purchase, lease, or subscribe to a portion of a community solar facility and use their portion of the power produced to lower their energy bills, much as if they had installed the system on their property. I am considering this legislation again for the 2020 session, as it taps into Florida's unbridled and unrealized solar energy potential and makes it accessible to all Floridians. We are working diligently to find a Representative to sponsor comparable legislation in the House.

Two additional bills I have recently filed are described below. I will continue to file legislation in advance of the 2020 session.

- I. **SB 250: Development Orders** – currently, if a challenger to a development orders loses a case, they must pay the prevailing party's attorney's fees. This sets a dangerous precedent that discourages concerned parties from challenging development in their communities. My bill deletes this entitlement.
- II. **SB 398: Concealed Weapons and Firearms** – jointly filed with Rep. Cindy Polo, this legislation will prohibit individuals from entering child care facilities with a firearm, either concealed or openly carried. While this law already applies to elementary schools, courthouses, and airports, it tragically does not apply to child care facilities. Why would we allow the presence of a firearm in such a vulnerable, innocent setting? It creates unnecessary risk and puts our youngest in harms way.

As always, our office is here to listen to your ideas and assist with your concerns. Give us a call!

Best wishes for a wonderful October,



Lori Berman