



FLORIDA SENATOR
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 DISTRICT 37



THE RODRÍGUEZ REPORT

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Seasons Greetings

2018



Legislative Session

Dear friends and neighbors,

The 2018 Legislative Session is almost here. It will start on January 9th. This newsletter is my effort to keep you informed on some of the most important topics -- but I can't cover them all so please reach out if you have any questions or if my office can help with anything. My email address is rodriguez.jose.web@flsenate.gov, my office phone number is 305-854-0365, and my office is located at 2100 Coral Way, Suite 505.

Taking action on climate change & sea level rise

As one of my top priorities, I have filed [SB 542](#), a bill **addressing sea level rise**. It would require construction projects that use state dollars to complete a sea level rise impact study. This bill would make sure state and local governments are adequately planning for sea level rise and coordinating with each other to address it. The Miami-Dade County Commission has passed a resolution supporting the bill ([Resolution #172600](#)). You can read more about the bill here: The Miami New Times, [Florida Bill Could Require Sea-Level-Rise Studies for Publicly Funded Buildings](#).



Sen. Rodríguez discussing SB 542 with members of the City of Miami Sea Level Rise Committee

Advocating for students

This Session I filed SB 294 to **tackle the problem of over-testing in our public school system**. This legislation would prevent young students from being held back solely based on the results of a high-stakes test.

During the 2017 Legislative Session I opposed SB 7069, a bill that I strongly believe negatively impacts public education with the aim of privatizing it. Undoing its effects and **making sure that our students, teachers and public schools have the resources and support** they need is a top priority for me this Session.



Sen. Rodríguez supporting community colleges at the National Community College Hispanic Council Conference in Miami

SB 646, another bill I have filed this Session, would create the "Sunshine Scholarship Program." The program would fund tuition for eligible students at community colleges aimed at **making higher education more accessible and affordable**.



Sen. Rodriguez meeting with FDOT about the ongoing impact of construction on Flagler construction on small businesses



Sen. Rodriguez addressing educators of English language learners along with Rep. Asencio



Sen. Rodriguez visiting seniors in the district during the holidays



Sen. Rodriguez helping senior residents affected by Hurricane Irma



Sen. Rodríguez advocating for the health of Biscayne Bay with Miami Waterkeeper Rachel Silverstein and artist Xavier Cortada

Promoting renewable energy and protecting consumers (especially seniors)

Allowing property owners to generate solar power and then sell or give it to their tenants is the subject of another priority bill, SB 292, I have filed. This bill is a step towards **making solar and renewable energy more widely available** in Florida.

As in prior years I have filed a bill that would **eliminate the anti-consumer “nuclear tax” (SB 716)**. That Florida law has allowed FPL to charge customers almost \$200 million to expand the nuclear facility at Turkey Point (in spite of documented environmental problems at the site) with no guarantee it will be built.

In the wake of Irma, I have been a vocal critic of policies that I think make us less prepared for storms and the inadequacy of policies to **prioritize the most vulnerable, especially low-income seniors**. I have filed SB 1166, a bill that makes it harder for utilities like FP&L to ask customers to pay extra where the electrical grid fails and they could have done better, and incentivizes residents and communities to put powerlines underground.

This year I have also filed SB 626. If successful, it would require the power companies to give families a 25% discount on the first 500 kWh consumed. This **progressive rate schedule would benefit low-income families and retirees on fixed income**.

Protecting small business

Our communities welcome roadway improvements, but **roadway construction must be done in a way that minimizes impacts on small businesses and local residents**. That has not been the case on Flagler. Roadway construction on a 3-mile stretch of Flagler Street has dragged on and devastated small businesses and impacted local residents. As part of an effort to deal with the problem, I filed SB 182 to change incentives for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to include looking out for small business and local residents. SB 182 requires FDOT to create policies that avoid delays and creates a grant program for small businesses who have been negatively impacted.

Assisting families moving from Puerto Rico

The devastation from Hurricane Maria has forced **American families in the Florida Keys, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands to look to Miami as a new or temporary home – and we must do everything we can to welcome them**. I am proud to be one of a group of legislators that has successfully worked to establish relief centers in Florida to aid evacuees from Puerto Rico and to push, successfully, for changes in public school policies that make it easier to welcome students (and teachers) from the island. I will continue to work closely with our schools and our public health system to ensure that families making the transition have the resources and support that they need.

Making the Capitol a safe place to work

A much needed reckoning has been going on across the country with respect to abusive and harassing behavior from persons in authority. The Florida Legislature has been no different. As a member of the Rules Committee I **have been working with my colleagues to reform the Legislature's sexual harassment policies**; proposed independent investigation and rules changes to make sure legislators can be held accountable for their actions; and been outspoken about the need to protect witnesses and alleged victims in the process.

Ensuring a fair economy and economic opportunity

As the Legislature develops and debates the state budget, I will continue to advocate as I have every year for affordable housing, responsible funding for our public schools, environmental protections and social services to be included; and to oppose shifting burdens onto increased local property taxes instead of using state revenue.

I will also continue to advocate for policies that increase wages, increase job opportunities and help Floridians be prepared for an ever-changing economy. This year, in addition to filing a bill to **increase the minimum wage** (SB 166), I will be filing 'green jobs' legislation aimed at helping Floridians, through education and apprenticeships, have **better access to environmentally-friendly and high-paying jobs** like work as a solar cell technician or a builder of energy-efficient buildings.

Advocating for our community

Several **anti-immigrant bills** have been making their way through the Florida Legislature, such as SB 308/HB 9 that require local governments to act as immigration agents. I **am actively opposing this legislation**, as I have in prior years, not just because it is wrong but because it makes our communities less safe.

SB 348 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.

Simple barriers, including posts called bollards, can **protect pedestrians** when cars accidentally crash into stores or jump the curb. It is a big and underappreciated safety problem. I filed SB 782 to advocate the installation of these barriers through a grant program with local governments. A recent report from NBC 6 explains my bill: [State Senator Files Bill to Prevent Cars From Crashing Into Stores](#)



Sen. Rodriguez speaking against anti-immigrant bills in the Legislature



Sen. Rodriguez discussing immigration reform with DREAMERS



Sen. Rodriguez addressing the National Employment Law Project #RaiseTheWage Conference in Washington DC



Sen. Rodriguez visiting neighbors associations during the summer



Sen. Rodriguez joining Miami-Dade Firefighters on a #RideAlong Day



Sen. Rodriguez visiting the Venezuelan Plebiscite held in South Florida



Sen. Rodriguez calling on the federal government to grant TPS to the Venezuelan community in the United States



Sen. Rodriguez advocating for Dream Act legislation



Sen. Rodriguez with Rep. Duran hosting one of several Obamacare enrollment events in the District



Sen. Rodriguez addressing chiefs of police about the implementation of condominium reforms

Standing up for democracy in Venezuela

This year, I am proud to be leading the effort to divest the State of Florida from certain corporations that do business with the dictatorial Maduro regime of Venezuela and am the sponsor of a bill that would do that, SB 70. It is a targeted action Floridians can and must take in the face of the ruin of democratic institutions, human rights abuses and scarcity to food and medicine at the hands of the Maduro regime.

Connecting with District 37 residents

Thank you to those of you who attended one of our town hall meetings over the summer or who have reached out to my office on topics you are about in the District. Many helpful ideas have come out of these conversations, useful to my team and I as we draft policies focused on the residents' needs.

It is an honor to serve District 37. From my family to yours, please have a blessed holiday season.

Sincerely,



State Senator José Javier Rodríguez

Opening of new DBPR office

Last Session, along with Sen. Garcia and Rep. Diaz, I sponsored and passed a condominium reforms to help condo residents. As part of these, I am happy to announce that there is, for the first time, **a Division of Condominiums office open to the public in Miami-Dade**. If you need assistance you can visit this office located at 8240 NW 52nd Terrace, Doral, FL 33166, or contact them via phone at (305) 629-1880. No appointment needed.



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