



THE BERMAN BRIEFING

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SENATE DISTRICT 31



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Whip

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Dear Friends & Neighbors,

As the fourth week of our legislative session concludes, I'd like to discuss with you what I've been up to.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to my Tallahassee office or email me at Berman.Lori.Web@flsenate.gov.

Legislative Update

SB 404 - Parental Consent for Abortion

This week, the Florida Senate took an unprecedented and unconstitutional step to restrict the privacy and reproductive rights of minor women. Many of you have been following the bill through the committee process. The bill passed the floor on Thursday in a party line vote - 23 to 17. I laid out a case for my no-vote, a case I believe to be grounded in fact and supported by our state's constitution. Excerpts from my speech on the bill are below:

"... In 2004, voters approved a constitutional amendment to allow for parental notification. The following year the legislature passed a law requiring parental notification 48 hours prior to a minor's abortion, directly in person or by telephone. For the last 15 years, parents have been notified when a minor is terminating a pregnancy. There is no evidence that the present system is not working..."

"... 90% of 14 year olds and 74% of 15 year olds said they involved at least one parent in their abortion decision. Those who didn't had a strong reason not to: minors who do not have trusting, supportive relationships are at greater risk of harm, like being thrown out or sexually abused..."

"... Government intrusion doesn't create strong families. Being coerced by the state into getting parental consent doesn't change family dynamics..."

"... Mandatory parental involvement jeopardizes a teen's health. Restricting access through consent and judicial bypasses causes further delays. All leading medical groups oppose mandatory parental involvement because the laws jeopardize teens' health and safety..."

"... Maternal mortality rates are rising. Evidence shows abortions are decreasing every year but it has not been shown that draconian laws are causing the reduction. Instead, better birth control and availability of contraception are working. We should be discussing ways to lower maternal mortality, include comprehensive and age-appropriate sex education in our public schools, and promote the use of long active reversible contraceptives. SB 404 does not address the true, pressing concerns of women's reproductive health. This bill is not about parental knowledge, conversations or guidance. Instead, it is an unconstitutional bill created to coerce minors into having children against their will. I urge my colleagues to reject SB 404."

Several Bills I've Recently Co-Sponsored

SB 280 - Climate Fiscal Responsibility, by Rodriguez

This bill requires the Economic Estimating Conference to annually prepare a report detailing the economic impact of climate change and provide a copy of the report to the Governor and the Legislature.

CS/SB 178 - Public Financing of Construction Projects, by Infrastructure and Security; Rodriguez

This bill requires a public entity that commissions or manages a construction project within the coastal building zone using state funds to conduct a sea-level impact projection (SLIP) study prior to commencing construction. The bill authorizes DEP to bring a civil action to seek injunctive relief to cease construction, enforce the section or rules adopted pursuant thereto, or seek recovery of state funds expended on a coastal structure, if construction commences without complying with the section.

CS/SB 70 - Panic Alarms in Public Schools, by Book

This bill would require all public schools in Florida to be equipped with panic alarm systems for use in school security emergencies. I'm committed to protecting our schools and will support any reasonable, responsible, and common-sense measure that would do so. This week, I met with Lori Alhadeff, the mother of Alyssa Alhadeff who was tragically taken from us at Marjory Stoneman Douglas.



Bill Action Update

Next week, I will be presenting our [Purple Alert](#) to its second committee reference - Children, Families, and Elder Affairs! With only one committee stop remaining - Rules - this bill is getting closer to a floor vote.

Recent Media Appearance

Last Friday, I appeared on WPTV's To the Point with Michael Williams to discuss climate resilience and climate change mitigation.

After eight years of a ban on the words "climate change" under Gov. Rick Scott, I'm relieved that our state is finally starting to address the monetary and environmental consequences of sea level rise.

Climate resilience is important - we need to be protecting peoples' property and hardening our communities from climate disturbances. But we also need to address causal factors of climate change on the front end. In 2018, renewable energy fueled only 3% of Florida's electricity net generation. We need to get serious about our carbon emissions by investing in renewable alternatives, which is far more cost-effective and opportunistic. A link to the interview can be found [here](#).

If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas on how to help move our state forward, please contact our office.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Lori Berman, State Senator District 31